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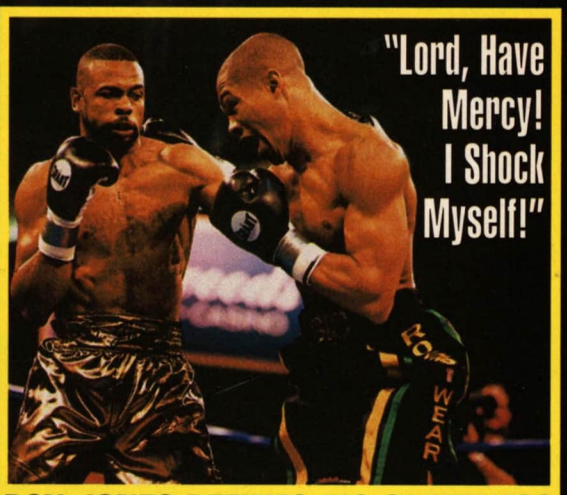

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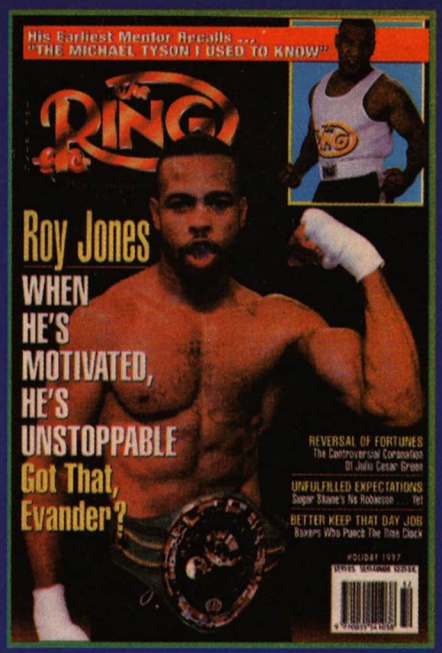

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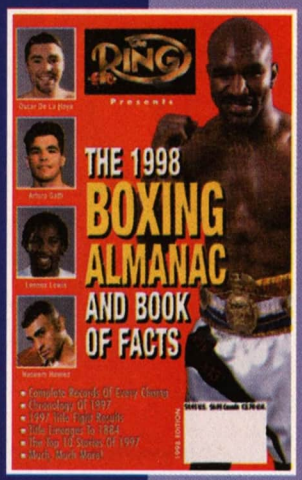

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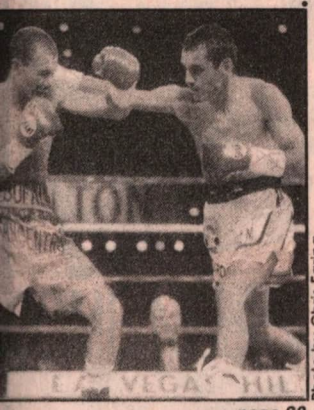

Photo by Chris Farina

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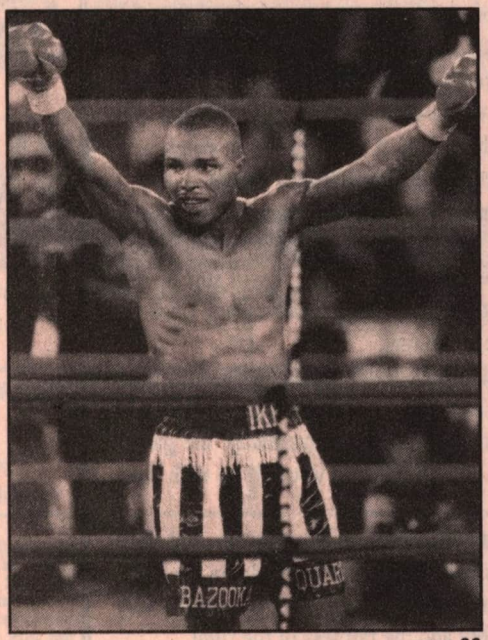

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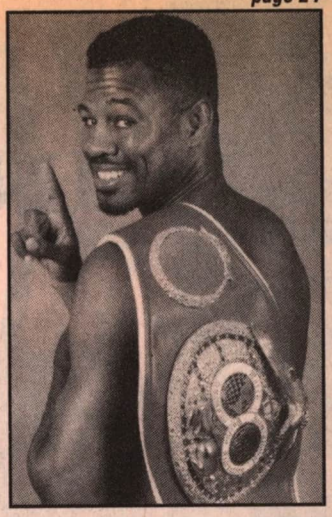

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RINGSIDE

It was a noble experiment, but maybe it's time to seriously consider scrapping day-before-the-fight weigh-ins. I'm not old enough to remember the time when fighters stepped on the scales at ringside—maybe drank a cup of broth—and then ducked between the ropes to fight. But for most of my life, same-day weigh-ins were the rule, and, in retrospect, seemed to have been a better arrangement than the system we have now, where most boxers weigh in anywhere from 24 to 36 hours before the first bell.

The reason usually sighted for day-before weigh-ins is safety. The theory being that it gives fighters who have dried out plenty of time to re-hydrate their bodies. And while that in undoubtedly true, it's also ass-backward and in many cases counterproductive. Maybe the best way to explain what I mean is to start at the beginning.

The notion of different weight classes for different sized boxers was formulated in the mid-19th century in order to bring a measure of fairness and safety to the rough-and-tumble world of bareknuckle prize fighting. Until then, all fighters, regardless of how much they weighed, fought each other. It all started with Nat Langham, the first middleweight champion, and grew (some would say overgrew) until we reached the current 17 weight classes. While many people, myself included, believe we've gone too far and need to eliminate some of the junior divisions, the argument for more and more weight classes has always been to make the sport as safe and as fair as possible.

The problem is that many fighters have figured out how to take unfair advantage of the day-before weigh-in, and that has led to the complete opposite of what was originally intended. Say, for instance, that both Fighter A and Fighter B weigh in at the welterweight limit of 147 the day before the fight, but Fighter A had to take a diuretic and boil himself down in the steam room in order to make it, while Fighter B, when in top condition, is a natural welter. The next day, Fighter A will probably be a middleweight or maybe even a super middleweight, while Fighter B will still be reasonably close to the contracted weight—and at a considerable disadvantage once the punches start to fly. There's nothing fair or safe about that.

On the surface, drastically cutting weight and then re-hydrating has been a boon for fighters like Arturo Gatti who can weigh in as a lightweight, but actually fight as a junior middle. And not only are Gatti's opponents at a severe handicap, the games Gatti and those like him are playing with their bodies is bound to catch up with them sooner or later. Probably sooner.

The day-before weigh-in is just a short-term solution to an old problem, and not a very satisfactory one at that. The bottom line is that more and more fighters are fighting at weights drastically above the division limit, which makes a mockery of the very concept that is supposed to be insuring their safety and the fairness of the fight.

It may sound simplistic, but the best way to guard the health and welfare of any fighters is to have him get in top shape and fight at whatever weight he happens to be when optimum conditioning is achieved. Sure, not having a hefty fight-time weight advantage is going to hurt some fighters' careers, but so what? In the long run, all that day-before weigh-ins have done is make it easier to cheat.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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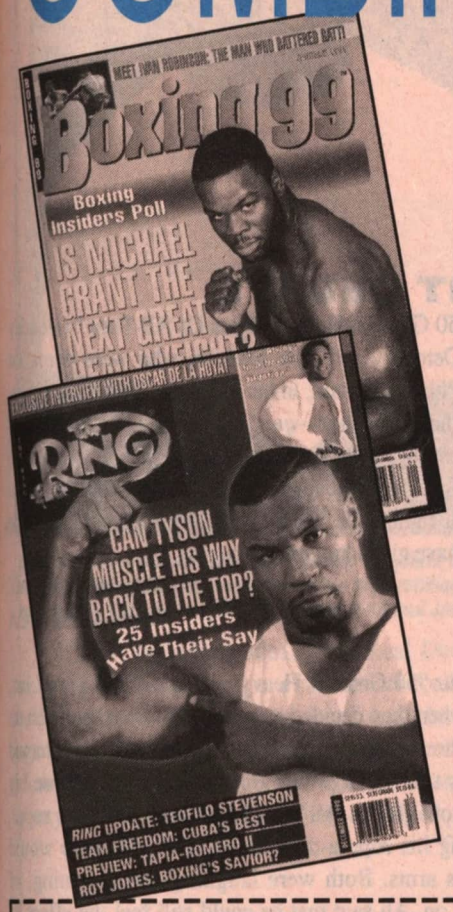

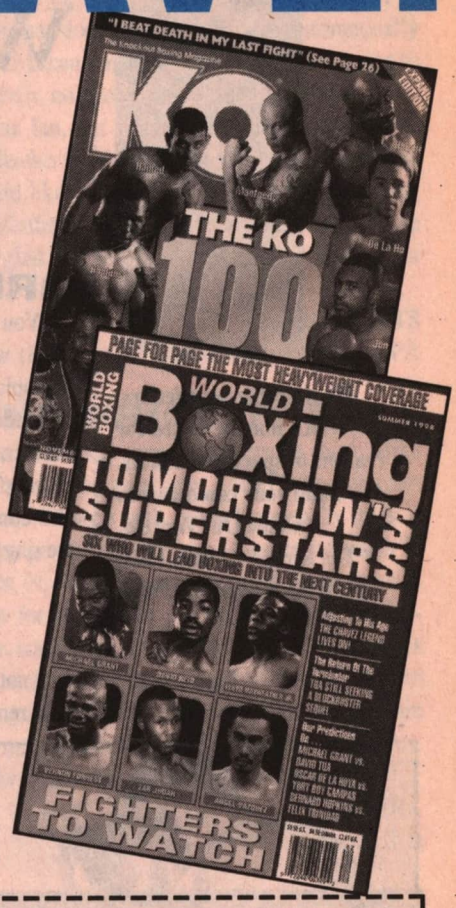

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COME OUT WRITING

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GREAT HEAVYWEIGHT DEBATE

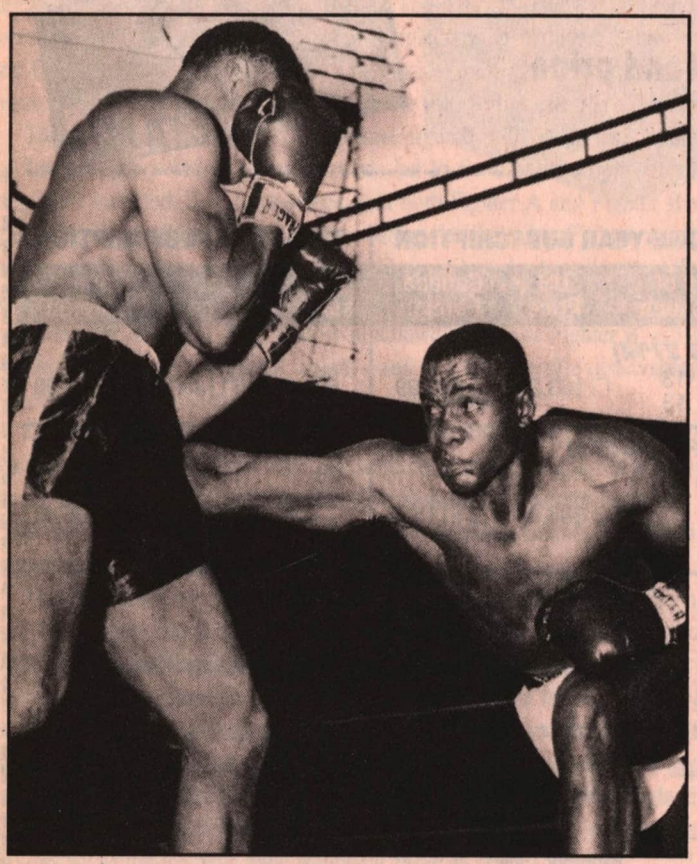
You confused talent with achievement in your "50 Greatest Heavyweights Of All-Time" (Holiday 1998) when you put Sonny Liston ahead of Jack Dempsey and Jack Johnson, who were dominant champions as well as revolutionary figures in boxing history. Liston, in his four title fights, twice overpowered the 30-pounds-lighter Floyd Patterson, and twice quit—*quit!*—against Muhammad Ali. Further, it has been established that Liston used an astringent on his gloves in a desperate and almost successful attempt to temporarily blind Ali in their first fight. Cleveland Williams and Eddie Machen also complained of something in their eyes after their fights with Liston. He was a tragic man outside the ring, and unworthy of the respect you and others have given him inside the ring.

LARRY MERCHANT
Santa Monica, CA

I noticed you rated Rocky Marciano sixth on your "50 Greatest Heavyweights Of All-Time" list. That reminds me of the time, almost 30 years ago, when they decided as a publicity stunt to match up Marciano, who had long since been retired, and Muhammad Ali, who was still in his prime. Both were wearing those big 12-ounce pillow gloves. Ali would lean up against the ropes, demonstrating his rope-a-dope thing, and Marciano would pound on his arms. Both were laughing and clowning, of course. Later on, Ali said that he could still feel the effect of Marciano's punches on his arms for two days. One wonders what might have happened if Marciano were in his prime using eight-ounce gloves.

I just have one last point to make. The fact that you said Jack Dempsey skirted Harry Wills because he was black is baloney. Dempsey didn't skirt him; his manager did.

HERB DOERING
Portland, OR



Sonny Liston, shown here in a victory over Eddie Machen in 1960, was given too much respect in "The 50 Greatest Heavyweights Of All-Time," according to HBO's Larry Merchant. Liston was rated seventh on the list.

In the last issue of THE RING, I was excited to see that the 50 greatest heavyweights had been ranked. I opened the issue and saw to my disbelief Evander Holyfield had been ranked third, behind only Muhammad Ali and Joe Louis! Am I actually supposed to believe that Evander, who is a fine and courageous champion, is the third greatest heavyweight of all-time?

Listen, I realize that these rankings are based on their accomplishments and also upon their effect on the sport, but what if these accomplishments are against mediocre opponents, such as a badly faded Mike Tyson or an unmotivated Riddick Bowe? Since "experts" and "historians" formulated this ranking, let me ask them how well would Evander do against a prime Foreman, Liston, Frazier, or Holmes, all of whom he is ranked above?

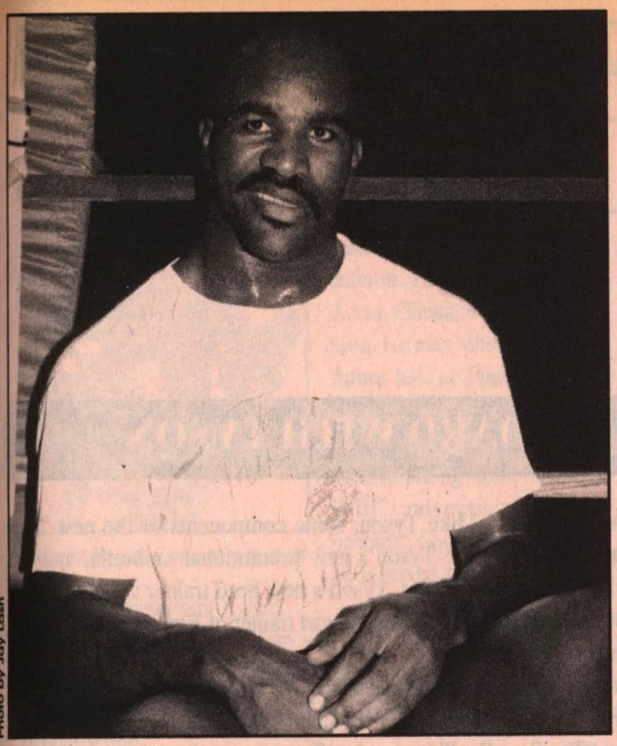


Photo by Joy Lash

WBA/IBF heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield might have been as surprised as some of our readers by his high ranking. "The Real Deal" was ranked third behind only Muhammad Ali and Joe Louis.

Don't get the wrong idea, "The Real Deal" is my present favorite heavyweight and is a role model for boxing, something that is badly needed right now. But I don't let my personal feelings interfere with my judgment of Evander in history. He's an admirable champion whose real abilities lie around that of Jerry Quarry in a division plagued by limited-skilled powerpunchers.

COSTA KALOYIOS
Edison, NJ

As a long-time boxing fan, I was intrigued at THE RING's take on the top 50 heavyweights of all-time. As a man born in the 1950s, I share a lot of the built-in prejudices of your editors. Still, the list itself was fascinating to go through.

In my opinion, the list is pretty accurate, but I have a few objections. Sonny Liston, I feel, is rated too high. True, he didn't get a shot at the title until late, but he was a limited fighter. He had a great left hand, a mediocre right, was rather slow on his feet, and as the first fight with Ali showed, he never really learned to cut off the ring. He was frequently in poor condition, and he lacked the huge heart that great fighters have.

Jack Johnson should be higher. His loss to Joe Choynski in 1901, and probably a few others, were bogus. Ezzard Charles is too high. A great light heavyweight, Charles was just too small physically. Earnie Shavers, a very limited big puncher, is also too high. Others who don't belong in my opinion: Michael Moorer, Pinklon Thomas, and Michael Dokes. There were many better contenders than those guys in the peak heavyweight years, the Ali-Frazier era.

Other than those quibbles, for me at least, you nailed it. And it was great to see Larry Holmes where he deserves to be.

FRANK GANNON
Demorest, GA

LEAVE NAZ ALONE

I would just like to say that I'm tired of all the bashing of "Prince" Naseem Hamed from the American critics. Most Americans root against him because he is flamboyant and he showboats, not to mention that he is *not* American. I don't care where the man is from, because he is fun and exciting to watch. I'm African-American, but that doesn't mean that I'm automatically going to root for every African-American who fights. I'm going to root for my favorite fighter, no matter where he comes from.

I am a very big Naz fan, but I'm not biased. I know that he hasn't fought the best featherweights yet, but don't call him a fraud because of that. I would like to see him fight Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales, Angel Manfredy, and Fred Norwood. Eventually he will. Until he does, be glad that he is a big attraction to a sport that I love dearly, a sport that needs all of the help it can get right now.

GEORGE BETTS
Pottstown, PA

CHECK THE PRICE TAG

I tend to wonder why boxing experts and critics think Mike Tyson is the primary force driving away fans. I don't believe it's Mr. Tyson's fault, or any other boxer's fault. What I personally think is driving fans away is the price. Yes, the price. It costs too much to actually see a superfight, or, worse yet, a regular one. Think about it. There is no major show for boxing that you can watch without having to pay a price. True, sometimes it's not much, but when it comes to pay-per-view, I bet some people have to sell vital organs just to watch Oscar De La Hoya make a title defense. I think the fans are still there, it's just that most of them can't afford it. If this continues, boxing will go into oblivion, and the fans will be lost forever.

YUICHI UEHARA
Honolulu, HI ■

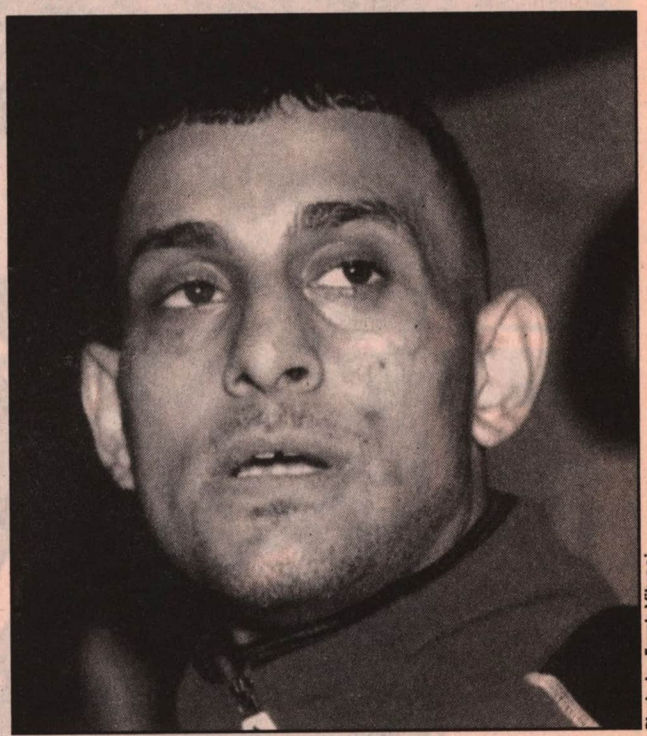


Photo by Frank Vitucci

Naseem Hamed takes a little too much abuse from Americans, says reader George Betts, who claims "The Prince" is good for the game.

ROUND ONE

BROOKS ON BOARD WITH TYSON

As a veil of secrecy continues to surround Mike Tyson, some components of the new Team Tyson are taking shape. America Presents will be Tyson's new promotional umbrella, and in a shrewd move by Iron Mike's new adviser, Shelly Finkel, Tyson's new head trainer will be Tommy Brooks, formerly an assistant trainer of Evander Holyfield and head trainer of former world champions Charles Murray, Fred Pendleton, and Junior Jones.

Brooks takes over with a reputation as a sound ring tactician. He's credited with devising the training scheme that was used by Holyfield in preparing for his first victory over Tyson. Brooks had sparring partner Gary Bell charge at "The Real Deal" to simulate Tyson's attack.

Brooks was contacted by Finkel around the time Tyson was seeking to regain his boxing license from Nevada. Tyson liked Brooks, but there was one drawback. Tyson originally didn't think Brooks would be hard enough on him. Brooks, after all, had a reputation as a nice guy.

"I have Mike's undivided attention now; he realizes he's made a lot of mistakes and bad choices as far as trainers are concerned," said Brooks, who replaces Richie Giachetti, Tyson's trainer for his last fight, the infamous DQ loss to Holyfield. "Number one, he has to get back to the basic fundamentals. Mike has been relying too much on his power. He couldn't get close enough to Evander to put his power to use. He has to go back to the ABCs of boxing.

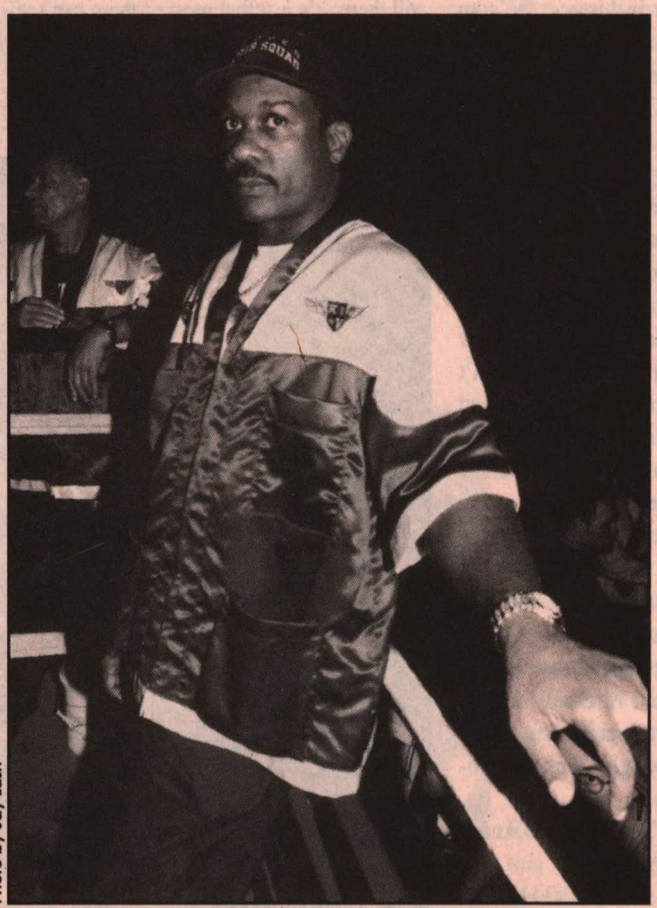


Photo by Jay Lash

Brooks: Former Holyfield assistant joins Team Tyson

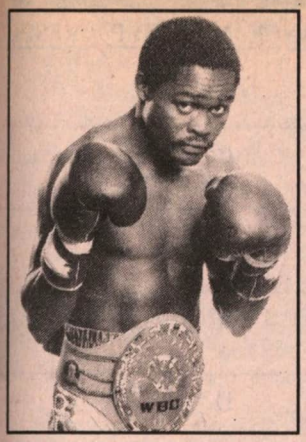
"We'll try to get him to relearn the same style he was taught under Cus D'Amato. Working with a fighter that is already established, it's hard to get him to change his style. We'll try to add to his style. I'd say he's about three fights removed from where he used to be in his prime. Right now, he's too squared upright. Mike is a tremendous boxer, he has confidence in his power."

Brooks said he feels very fortunate to be in this position. Brooks spoke to Holyfield about the change and "The Real Deal" gave him his blessing, saying he's for the advancement of any of his people.

"Mike wants a title bad, like a hungry dog wants a bone," Brooks said. "Don Turner is a very capable trainer and a good friend, but business is business. I truly believe Tyson won't feel his career is fulfilled until he fights Evander again."

—Joe Santoliquito

NELSON CALLS IT QUITS



Nelson: Hall of Fame career ends

Class dismissed. After almost 20 years as one of boxing's sweetest scientists, "The Professor" has given his last lesson in the manly art of self-defense. That's the word out of Accra, Ghana, where two-division former champion and future hall of famer Azumah Nelson, 40, announced his retirement from the ring shortly after returning home from the WBC convention in Johannesburg, South Africa, where he received the organization's Lifetime Achievement Award.

"I am not the type of man who says one thing and turns his back on it tomorrow," Nelson told the Accra-based *Graphic Sports* when asked if there was any chance he'd tarnish his legacy by fighting again.

Nelson, who made his pro debut in December 1997, first caught the attention of American fans with his brave, albeit losing, bid to win the WBC featherweight title from Salvador Sanchez in July '82. But despite being stopped in the 15th round by the great Mexican, it was obvious that Nelson was of championship timber. And on December 8, 1984, he kayoed Wilfredo Gomez to capture the WBC 126-pound crown, which Gomez had won after Sanchez' death in an auto accident. Nelson made six successful title defenses, then moved up to the 130-pound class and captured the WBC super featherweight title on February 29, 1988, with a 12-round decision over Mario Martinez. After 10 successful defenses, he lost the WBC belt to Jesse James Leija on May 7, 1994.

At that point, most experts thought Nelson was washed-up, but he proved them wrong by regaining the WBC super feather title in December '95 with a fifth-round knockout of Gabriel Ruelas. Nelson's third reign as world champion ended on March 22, 1997, when he was outpointed by Genaro Hernandez. He had one more fight, losing a decision to old rival Leija on July 7, 1998.

Nelson, considered a national treasure in Ghana, won fans around the world with his dignified demeanor, classy boxing skills, and proclivity for winning on the road. Other world champions he beat during his 39-5-2 (28) career: Jeff Fenech, Marcos Villasana, Juan LaPorte, and Calvin Grove.

—Nigel Collins

HELPING LIFT THE DARK SHADOWS

In early-November, Roseland, the old New York City dance hall that now serves as a venue for rock concerts, was the site for a boxing fundraiser to benefit the children of stricken boxer Gerald McClellan, who has been disabled since his knockout loss to Nigel Benn in 1995. The event was co-sponsored by HBO, Ring 8, and WBC/WBA light heavyweight champion Roy Jones, who served as honorary chairman. Other fighters on hand for the event were Oscar De La Hoya, Sugar Shane Mosley, Michael Grant, Junior Jones, Derrick Gainer, Mark Breland, Tracy Patterson, and Michael Bentt.

The centerpiece of the evening was the premier screening of the HBO documentary *Sugar Ray Robinson: The Bright Lights And Dark Shadows Of A Champion*, which aired nationally on December 8. Several members of the Robinson family were also at Roseland for the occasion. Besides the film, there was a silent auction of boxing memorabilia organized by Ring 8, with the proceeds going to the McClellan fund. All told, over $900,000 was raised. Readers wishing to contribute can send donations to: Ring 8/Gerald McClellan Fund, c/o The Waterfront Crab House, 2-03 Borden Ave., Long Island City, NY 11101.

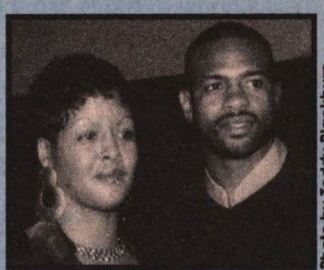


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

McClellan's sister, Lisa Jordan, poses at benefit with Jones

CHRIS DUNDEE, 1907-1998

Dundee: Legendary manager/promoter dies at 91

The manager and promoter who put Miami Beach on the boxing map, Chris Dundee, died on November 16 at a Miami nursing home at the age of 91. Born Cristofo Mirena, Dundee managed approximately 300 fighters (including world champions Midget Wolgast, Ken Overlin, and Ezzard Charles), promoted more than 1,000 fights (including the first Muhammad Ali-Sonny Liston bout in 1964), and ran the famous Fifth Street Gym in Miami Beach after moving there from New York in 1950. While many other promoters in similar-sized cities were going out of business, Dundee succeeded in putting on shows at the Miami Beach Convention Hall on a regular basis for 27 years.

Dundee also promoted pro wrestling, the circus, and the Harlem Globetrotters. His brother, Angelo, who trained Ali at the Fifth Street Gym, said Chris never really recovered from a stroke suffered nine years ago. Chris was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1994.

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
11-6-98	Vinny Pazienza W 10 Arthur Allen	ESPN2	sm	C	B-	B
Paz is no Hall of Famer, but we'll miss him when he's gone; this was fun						
11-6-98	Tom Johnson KO 8 Jose Montes	FOXSN	jl	C+	C-	C
"Boom Boom" has to work hard to take out opponent with .500 record						
11-6-98	Thomas Hearns KO 1 Jay Snyder	FOXSN	c	C+	D	C
Don't get excited; Hearns was going down from a jab when he landed knockout punch						
11-7-98	Jorge Luis Gonzalez KO 10 Josh Dempsey	USSB	h	D+	B	B-
Next up for Gonzalez is Chip Marciano						
11-7-98	Virgil Hill KO 1 Jimmy Hayes	USSB	c	C-	D-	C
A bodyshot folds Hayes in half; wonder where Hill learned that from						
11-9-98	Jose Badillo W 10 Antonio Ramirez	FOXSN	jl	B-	B-	B+
Down three times in the third, Ramirez floors Badillo in the fourth but fades late						
11-9-98	Edgar Ruiz KO 5 Jose Luis Benitez	FOXSN	w	B+	B+	A
Ruiz overcomes nasty gash to crush Benitez in wildly entertaining brawl						
11-13-98	Sajad Abdullah Aziz D 10 Eliseo Castillo	ESPN2	c	C+	B	B-
Team Freedom member Castillo starts fast, but runs out of gas; good scrap						
11-13-98	Diobelys Hurtado W 10 Manuel Gomez	ESPN2	w	B-	B-	D
If Gomez landed one good shot in 10 rounds, we didn't see it						
11-13-98	**Ricardo Lopez W 12 Rosendo Alvarez**	**Show**	**WBA s**	**A**	**A+**	**A+**
If not for Gatti-Robinson, this is fight of the year						
11-13-98	Eric Harding W 12 Montell Griffin	FOXSN	lh	B-	C+	D
Griffin robbed; somewhere, in between helpings, James Toney is laughing						
11-14-98	**Shane Mosley KO 9 James Leija**	**HBO**	**IBF l**	**A**	**C+**	**B-**
If you were surprised Leija lasted this long, you're not alone						
11-14-98	**Roy Jones KO 10 Otis Grant**	**HBO**	**WBA/WBC lh**		**A**	**C- C**
This was the equivalent of Michelangelo finger painting, but we'll take it						
11-14-98	Paulie Ayala KO 4 Ivan Salazar	Uni	b	C+	C-	B
Good first fight back for Ayala after unsuccessful title challenge						
11-14-98	Jorge Paez KO 2 Juan Polo-Perez	Uni	jl	B+	B-	B
Paez does in two what Wayne McCullough couldn't do in 10 last May						
11-20-98	Diego Corrales KO 5 Hector Arroyo	ESPN2	jl	C+	B+	B-
Corrales looking more and more like the real thing; Arroyo no easy mark						
11-20-98	Oba Carr W 8 Verdell Smith	ESPN2	w	B	C	D-
Carr stays in De La Hoya derby, but wins no friends in snoozer						
11-20-98	Stevie Johnston KO 6 Demetrio Ceballos	ESPN2	l	A-	B-	B
Johnston sharp in first fight since losing title; Ceballos dissected						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

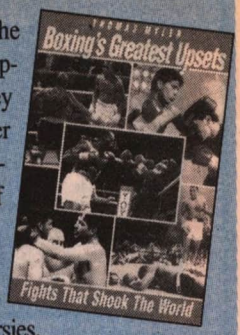
Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF

I'm pretty sure that Jack "Doc" Kearns didn't get his nickname because he "carried around his 'cuts' equipment in a small black bag" and that Muhammad Ali's sparring partner was named Cody Jones, not Cody Smith. I'm not at all sure I believe Sonny Liston spent two hours a day standing on his head to increase his neck girth. But other than those picayune issues and a few more like them (e.g., Liston "was known as 'Old Stone Face'"; by whom, except perhaps Mrs. Liston?) there's not much to quarrel with in Thomas Myler's account of *Boxing's Greatest Upsets: Fights That Shook The World* (Robson Books, £14.95, 177 pages).

This is a livelier book than Myler's previous "inside story" of the life of Sugar Ray Robinson, and his reports on 15 major ring upsets, from James J. Corbett's toppling of John L. Sullivan in 1892 to Frankie Randall's shocker over Julio Cesar Chavez 102 years later, provide entertaining enough reading even though there is no new historical ground broken.

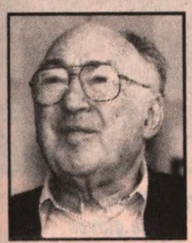


It's a fair mix of the long-ago and the modern, and, interestingly enough, the chapters on such latter-day upsets as Iran Barkley over Tommy Hearns and Stevie Cruz over Barry McGuigan are actually more engaging than the pretty familiar terrain of Dempsey-Tunney and Johnson-Jeffries. Myler doesn't just deal with what happened inside the ropes, but also provides a decent, balanced overview of the controversies, personalities, and historical contexts that make these fights worth reading about.

While serious ring historians may not find much here to quicken the pulse, *Boxing's Greatest Upsets* is a useful primer for the average fight fan.

—Pete Ehrmann

HARRY MARKSON, 1906-1998



Markson: Garden chief dies at 92

Legendary publicist and promoter Harry Markson, 92, died on November 10 at a hospital in Red Bank, New Jersey, near his home. Markson was best known for his tenure as president of Madison Square Garden Boxing Inc. from 1968 to '73, the years considered by many to be the boxing heyday of the famous arena. By the time he retired, Markson had been involved in promoting over 2,000 fights at the Garden.

In 1933, Markson, a Kingston, New York, native, became a part-time publicity man for the Garden. He went on to become publicity director for the 20th Century Sporting Club, the Garden's top promotional outfit, and he later took a top position with another promotional group, the International Boxing Club. He began working directly for Madison Square Garden in the late-'40s, and retired to a consulting position in '73. Markson played a role in scheduling the two title fights that opened the new Garden in '68, Joe Frazier vs. Buster Mathis and Emile Griffith vs. Nino Benvenuti, and later helped put together the historic first fight between Muhammad Ali and Frazier in '71.

Markson was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1992. He is survived by his wife, Rachel, a son, and a granddaughter.

EVERLASTING FELLOWSHIP

When he was a main event heavyweight 40 years ago, fighting the likes of Alfredo Zuany, Frankie Daniels, Roger Rischer, and Thad Spencer, he was known as Frank "Rocky" Haynes. Now he's Rev. Franklin Haynes, pastor of the Mt. Elim Baptist Church in Los Angeles, and says, "I realized how much boxing meant to me after everything was over. I gained lots of friends." In October, Haynes and two of those friends, former California light heavyweight champion Monroe Ratliff (against whom Haynes went one-for-three in the ring) and Don Grant, who fought Floyd Patterson in 1955, went in search of another one, former light heavyweight and heavyweight contender Tommy Harrison.

"He was a great fighter and a great person," Haynes said about Harrison, whose quick left jab once wrecked Rocky Marciano's nose in a sparring session. But now Harrison lives on the streets of Santa Ana, pulling everything he owns around in a grocery cart. After inquiring at a local church, the trio found Harrison and spent several hours having what Haynes called "fellowship in the streets."

"It hurts to see a guy like that," said Ratliff, who stopped Harrison when they fought in 1958. "That could be any one of us."

The trio gave Harrison money, and intends to raise more for him and try to help him, in Haynes' words, "get himself together and be recognized as a good, top citizen."

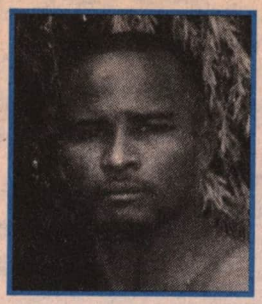
Harrison back in his fighting days

"If we can get him involved in coming with us, I think that will help change him," added the reverend, mentioning former contenders Charlie Powell and Clarence Henry as others from their era who are concerned about Harrison.

"We are a fraternity," said Haynes of the informal group whose members used to try to knock one another down. But now it's the opposite. "We stand up for one another. We care for one another."

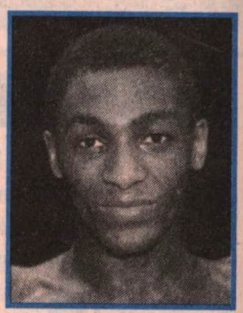
—Pete Ehrmann

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Hurtado: Kicks off Cuba's radio days

Yet another lawsuit was filed against **Mike Tyson** in late-October. This time it's Las Vegas police officer **Thomas Moyer** who's doing the filing, claiming Tyson struck him during the melee that followed "Iron Mike's" disqualification in his second fight with **Evander Holyfield**. The suit asks for unspecified damages for physical pain and mental anguish suffered as a result of Tyson hitting Moyer in the chest while officers were trying to restrain the ex-champ ... Tragedy struck in Tokyo on October 27 when Japanese junior featherweight **Ken Katagiri** died two weeks after he was knocked out in the ninth round by **Fusaaki Takenaga**. Katagiri, 28, went into a coma immediately after the fight, and brain surgery was unsuccessful ... On November 13, a professional boxing match was broadcast live on radio in Cuba for the first time ever. Radio Marti carried fights from Miami featuring Cuban defectors **Diobelys Hurtado**, who outpointed **Manuel Gomez**, and **Eliseo Castillo**, who was knocked down twice en route to a controversial draw against **Sajad Abdullah Aziz** ... Just a few months after getting his promoter's license restored in New Jersey, **Don King** captured a similar victory in Florida. At the end of a day-long late-October meeting filled with shouting and accusations, the Florida State Athletic Commission voted 4-1 for an agreement that would spare King from having his promoter's license revoked. The complaint to the commission was brought by **Julio Cesar Chavez'** attorneys, who are trying to void a contract between the Mexican fighter and King ... Carson City, Nevada-based trainer/gym proprietor/manager/matchmaker/promoter **Ted Walker** died of congestive heart failure on August 20 at the age of 80. Among Walker's many achievements was organizing the first women's boxing sanctioning body in the United States in 1975. At the time of his death, Walker was still active in boxing, working as the co-manager of cruiserweight contender **Kenny Keene** ... Three-time super middleweight world title challenger **Herol Graham** of England announced his retirement in mid-November, citing a detached retina as the reason for his decision. Defensive wizard Graham, 39, posted a career record of 48-6 (28) ... On a mildly humorous note, light heavyweight **Ernest Mateen** was knocked out before his November bout with **Gabriel Hernandez** even began. It seems Mateen slipped in the bathroom before the fight and banged his head. He had to be taken to St. Joseph's Hospital in New York City, and the fight was called off.



Graham: Brit hangs up the gloves

THE PUNCHLINES

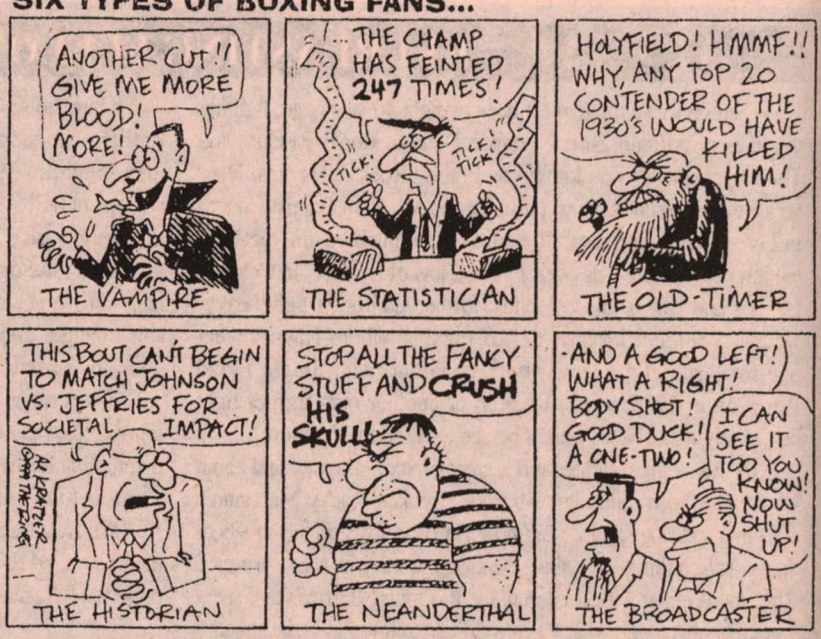
"My adversary appears to be in shape, and I think he'll hold out for at least two minutes."

—WBA cruiserweight champion Fabrice Tiozzo on November opponent Ezequiel Paixao, after Tiozzo's last opponent, Terry Ray, was knocked out in 60 seconds

"He has no balls. I'm gonna break Oscar like a chicken."

—Ike Quartey at the press conference announcing that his bout with De La Hoya had been postponed

AL KRATZER'S VIEW



The RING®
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Welterweight
2. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
3. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
   Heavyweight
4. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Welterweight
5. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Flyweight
6. **NASEEM HAMED**
   Featherweight
7. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Junior Bantamweight
8. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Lightweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Strawweight
10. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
    Welterweight

(For period ended November 29, 1998)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No major action as attention focuses on Mike Tyson's comeback and the Evander Holyfield-Lennox Lewis unification bout. David Izon could regain a top-10 spot with more performances like his recent up-from-the-floor kayo of Darroll Wilson.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: WBA champ Fabrice Tiozzo retains top spot with easy defense over Brazil's Ezequiel Paixao. Virgil Hill's a cruiser now, but one-round blastout of hapless Jay Snyder not enough to earn him rating at 190 pounds.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Eric Harding enters at six due to his upset, albeit controversial, decision over Montell Griffin, who slips from fourth to seventh. Hill exits division's rankings for the first time in more than a decade.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: England's Herol Graham, ranked ninth last issue, has retired due to a detached retina. Vinny Pazienza is back at number 10.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Otis Grant moved up to light heavyweight for a shot at WBA/WBC champion Roy Jones and suffered a 10th-round TKO defeat, which resulted in him dropping from fourth to fifth as a 160-pounder. Former WBC champ Keith Holmes moves from fifth to fourth with points win over Urbano Gurrola.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No movement.

WELTERWEIGHTS: It turns out that James Page *is* the WBA champion after all. There was confusion surrounding Page's kayo of Andrei Pestraiev due to opposing rulings by courts in New Jersey and France as to whether or not the vacant title was at stake. But the latest rankings issued by the WBA list Page, who has a mandatory defense against Jose Luis Lopez on December 5, as champion. Page moves up a spot to sixth, while Oba Carr falls to seventh after unimpressive decision win against Verdell Smith.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Kostya Tszyu advances from fourth to third on the strength of his fifth-round stoppage of Diobelys Hurtado, and gains the WBC interim title in the process. Hurtado, previously ranked ninth, exits the top 10. Hector Lopez, who previously held down the fifth position, is back behind bars and out of the ratings. New additions: Unbeaten Zab Judah debuts at seven, and Giovanni Parisi is back at 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Sugar Shane Mosley stays on top of the 135-pounders with ninth-round TKO of James Leija, who hangs on to 10th spot with better-than-expected showing against the IBF titlist.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Division's big guns on hold until after the Floyd Mayweather-Angel Manfredy showdown.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Streaking Juan Manuel Marquez passes idle IBF boss Manuel Medina to occupy sixth position.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Kennedy McKinney moved up to full-fledged featherweight to challenge WBC champion Luisito Espinosa, and suffered a second-round knockout defeat. Afterward, McKinney said he'll stick to fighting junior feathers, where he falls from third to sixth due to devastating loss.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Sixth-ranked Paulie Ayala stays in the hunt for a rematch with Joichiro Tatsuyoshi with a comeback kayo over Ivan Salazar. The first Tatsuyoshi-Ayala match ended in an unsatisfactory technical win for the defending champ, resulting from an accidental headbutt.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: IBF champ Johnny Tapia stays at the top of the 115-pound heap, but that will change if he's successful in his upcoming challenge for Nana Konadu's WBA 118-pound belt.

FLYWEIGHTS: No major action.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Unranked Ladislao Vazquez gave WBC champ Saman Sorjaturong a scare, but the long-reigning Thai rallied back to keep the title and top spot among the 108-pounders.

STRAWWEIGHTS: WBC kingpin Ricardo Lopez stays at number one and gains the WBA title following his epic battle with Rosendo Alvarez, who retains the number-two ranking despite split-decision loss.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Inactivity plummets Pernell Whitaker from sixth to 10th, raising everybody below him up one notch. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended November 29, 1998

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

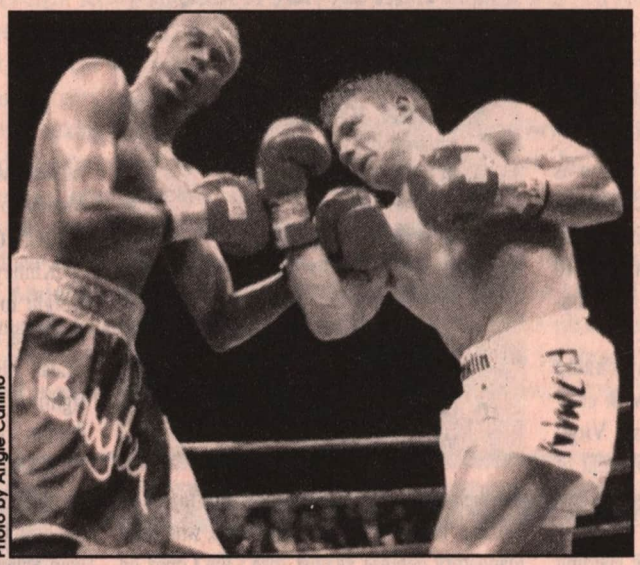


Photo by Angie Carlino

Vinny Pazienza beat Arthur Allen to return to the ratings

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *36-3 (WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *34-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **GEORGE FOREMAN** Marshall, TX *76-5*
4. **MICHAEL GRANT** Norristown, PA *28-0*
5. **MICHAEL MOORER** Detroit, MI *39-2*
6. **SHANNON BRIGGS** New York, NY *31-2*
7. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *26-0*
8. **IKE IBEABUCHI** Dallas, TX *19-0*
9. **DAVID TUA** Totowa, NJ *31-1*
10. **ANDREW GOLOTA** Chicago, IL *32-3*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **FABRICE TIOZZO** France *40-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ** Germany *24-0 (WBC Champ)*
3. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS** Las Vegas, NV *29-4-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ** Argentina *24-2-1*
5. **CARL THOMPSON** England *24-4*
6. **IMAMU MAYFIELD** New Brunswick, NJ *18-2*
7. **ROBERT DANIELS** Miami, FL *38-3-1*
8. **RALF ROCCHIGIANI** Germany *40-9-7*
9. **SAUL MONTANA** Mexico *32-6*
10. **KENNY KEENE** Emmett, ID *43-3*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL *38-1 (WBC/WBA Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI** Germany *38-0*
3. **REGGIE JOHNSON** Houston, TX *38-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **GRACIANO ROCCHIGIANI** Germany *40-4-1 (WBC Interim Champ)*
5. **LOU DEL VALLE** Bronx, NY *28-2*
6. **ERIC HARDING** Philadephia, PA *15-0*
7. **MONTELL GRIFFIN** Chicago, IL *32-2*
8. **MICHAEL NUNN** Davenport, IA *53-4*
9. **ANTONIO TARVER** Orlando, FL *11-0*
10. **DAVID TELESCO** Port Chester, NY *20-2*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **FRANKIE LILES** N. Hollywood, CA *32-1 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JOE CALZAGHE** Wales *25-0*
3. **RICHIE WOODHALL** England *25-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **SVEN OTTKE** Germany *13-0 (IBF Champ)*
5. **CHARLES BREWER** Philadelphia, PA *32-6*
6. **ROBIN REID** England *26-1-1*
7. **THOMAS TATE** Houston, TX *35-5*
8. **VINCENZO NARDIELLO** Italy *33-6*
9. **ANDREI SCHKALIKOV** Russia *29-4-1*
10. **VINNY PAZIENZA** Cranston, RI *43-7*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA *34-2-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **WILLIAM JOPPY** Washington, D.C. *26-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **HASSINE CHERIFI** France *26-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **KEITH HOLMES** Washington, D.C. *31-2*
5. **OTIS GRANT** Canada *31-2-1*
6. **ANTWUN ECHOLS** Davenport, IA *21-2-1*
7. **ROBERT ALLEN** Atlanta, GA *23-2 (IBF Interim Champ)*
8. **ROBERT McCRACKEN** England *32-0*
9. **JULIO CESAR GREEN** Brooklyn, NY *23-3*
10. **RYAN RHODES** England *17-1*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **YORY BOY CAMPAS**
   Mexico 72-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **LAURENT BOUDOUANI**
   France 37-2-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **KEITH MULLINGS**
   Brooklyn, NY 16-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **HARRY SIMON**
   Namibia 17-0
5. **JULIO CESAR VASQUEZ**
   Argentina 60-3
6. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   St. Petersburg, FL 38-2
7. **BRONCO McKART**
   Monroe, MI 35-2
8. **TONY MARSHALL**
   Albany, NY 30-7-6
9. **EMMETT LINTON**
   Tacoma, WA 25-2
10. **RAUL MARQUEZ**
    Houston, TX 29-1

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA 29-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico 33-0 (IBF Champ)
3. **IKE QUARTEY**
   Ghana 34-0-1
4. **PERNELL WHITAKER**
   Norfolk, VA 41-2-1
5. **JOSE LUIS LOPEZ**
   Mexico 42-3-2
6. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA 22-3 (WBA Champ)
7. **OBA CARR**
   Detroit, MI 47-2-1
8. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 25-0
9. **WILFREDO RIVERA**
   Puerto Rico 28-3-1
10. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
    Australia 23-0-1

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **VINCE PHILLIPS**
   Las Vegas, NV 39-3 (IBF Champ)
2. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 43-2 (WBA Champ)
3. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia 22-1-1 (WBC Interim Champ)
4. **MIGUEL ANGEL GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 43-1-1
5. **BOLILLO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico 48-3-1
6. **KHALID RAHILOU**
   France 32-3
7. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 19-0
8. **JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 100-3-2
9. **REGGIE GREEN**
   Clinton, MD 28-2
10. **GIOVANNI PARISI**
    Italy 36-3-1

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 30-0 (IBF Champ)
2. **JEAN-BAPTISTE MENDY**
   France 52-7-2 (WBA Champ)
3. **CESAR BAZAN**
   Mexico 34-2-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 25-1
5. **ISRAEL CARDONA**
   Hartford, CT 30-2
6. **ORZUBEK NAZAROV**
   Japan 26-1
7. **PHILLIP HOLIDAY**
   South Africa 33-1
8. **IVAN ROBINSON**
   Philadelphia, PA 26-2
9. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 29-3
10. **JAMES LEIJA**
    San Antonio, TX 36-4-2

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR**
   Grand Rapids, MI 18-0 (WBC Champ)
2. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN 25-2-1
3. **TAKANORI HATAKEYAMA**
   Japan 22-0-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **ROBERTO GARCIA**
   Oxnard, CA 31-0 (IBF Champ)
5. **YONG SOO CHOI**
   South Korea 24-3-1
6. **GENARO HERNANDEZ**
   Los Angeles, CA 38-2-1
7. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Austin, TX 25-1
8. **GOYO VARGAS**
   Mexico 37-6-1
9. **ANATOLY ALEXANDROV**
   Kazakhstan 34-3
10. **ARNULFO CASTILLO**
    Mexico 28-0-2

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **NASEEM HAMED**
   England 31-0
2. **LUISITO ESPINOSA**
   Philippines 44-7 (WBC Champ)
3. **FRED NORWOOD**
   St. Louis, MO 32-0-1
4. **DERRICK GAINER**
   Pensacola, FL 26-4
5. **ANTONIO CERMENO**
   Venezuela 32-2 (WBA Champ)
6. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 27-1
7. **MANUEL MEDINA**
   Mexico 55-10 (IBF Champ)
8. **ANGEL VAZQUEZ**
   Hartford, CT 16-0
9. **CESAR SOTO**
   Mexico 52-7-2
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ**
    Puerto Rico 50-8-3

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **VUYANI BUNGU**
   South Africa 36-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 31-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Mexico 47-2
4. **WAYNE McCULLOUGH**
   Las Vegas, NV 22-2
5. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
   Mexico 24-0-1 (WBA Champ)
6. **KENNEDY McKINNEY**
   Memphis, TN 33-4-1
7. **CARLOS BARRETO**
   Venezuela 13-0 (WBA Interim Champ)
8. **MBULELO BOTILE**
   South Africa 23-1
9. **RAFAEL DEL VALLE**
   Puerto Rico 23-2-1
10. **DANNY ROMERO**
    Albuquerque, NM 33-3

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
   Cincinnati, OH 18-0-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **NANA KONADU**
   Ghana 39-3 (WBA Champ)
3. **JOICHIRO TATSUYOSHI**
   Japan 17-4-1 (WBC Champ)
4. **JORGE ELIECER JULIO**
   Colombia 40-1
5. **SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSUK**
   Thailand 16-1
6. **PAULIE AYALA**
   Ft. Worth, TX 25-1
7. **VEERAPHOL SAHAPROM**
   Thailand 15-1
8. **DAORUNG C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 61-6-3
9. **ADAN VARGAS**
   Mexico 28-1-1
10. **DARIO AZUAGA**
    Paraguay 42-0-1

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
   Albuquerque, NM 44-0-2 (IBF Champ)
2. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea 13-0 (WBC Champ)
3. **SATOSHI IIDA**
   Japan 25-1-1 (WBA Champ)
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines 39-1-2
5. **YOKTHAI SITHOAR**
   Thailand 14-1-1
6. **HAROLD GREY**
   Colombia 22-2
7. **LUIS BOLANO**
   Colombia 23-0
8. **RATANACHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand 25-3
9. **JULIO GAMBOA**
   Nicaragua 21-3
10. **JOEL LUNA ZARATE**
    Mexico 32-2-2

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 36-1 (IBF Champ)
2. **CHATCHAI DUTCHBOY GYM**
   Thailand 33-1 (WBC Champ)
3. **HUGO SOTO**
   Argentina 50-5-2 (WBA Champ)
4. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 20-0 (WBA Interim Champ)
5. **JOSE BONILLA**
   Venezuela 24-5
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand 29-1
7. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 37-3
8. **RUBEN SANCHEZ-LEON**
   Mexico 22-7-1
9. **DAVID GUERAULT**
   France 13-0
10. **CHOKVIWAT CHOKCHAI**
    Thailand 30-3

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **SAMAN SORJATURONG**
   Thailand 39-2-1 (WBC Champ)
2. **PICHITNOI C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 20-1 (WBA Champ)
3. **BABY JAKE MATLALA**
   South Africa 49-10-2
4. **JUAN CORDOBA**
   Argentina 32-4-3
5. **MELCHOR COB CASTRO**
   Mexico 52-5-4
6. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines 25-3-1
7. **OSVALDO GUERRERO**
   Mexico 24-3
8. **YEOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea 18-1
9. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa 14-0
10. **HADAO CP GYM**
    Thailand 36-11-1

STRAWWEIGHT
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico 47-0-1 (WBC/WBA Champ)
2. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua 24-1-1
3. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa 13-2-2 (IBF Champ)
4. **WANDEE CHOR CHAREON**
   Thailand 22-3 (WBC Interim Champ)
5. **RATANAPOL SOR VORAPIN**
   Thailand 36-3-1
6. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 38-1
7. **ROCKY LIN**
   Philippines 26-2
8. **ALA VILLAMOR**
   Philippines 29-2-1
9. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 19-1-1
10. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
    Columbia 30-2

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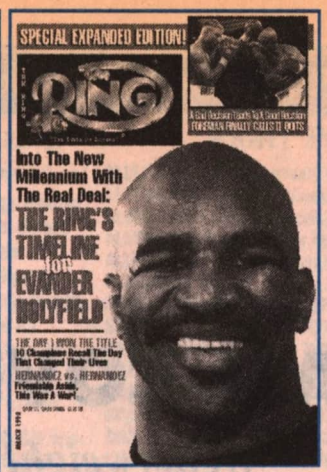

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July 1996: Tyson! The Baddest ... But Is He The Best? Plus: De La Hoya-Chavez preview, Fabrice Tiozzo, Tommy Morrison & HIV, Malinga-Benn, closed-circuit, Chacon-Gomez.

Aug. 1996: A Closer Look At Tyson. Where He's At ... And Where He's Going. Plus: Joe Frazier, Roberto Duran, Buster Douglas, Arturo Gatti, women's boxing.

Sept. 1996: Lennox Lewis: Tough Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lewis-Mercer, Olympic team, Pernell Whitaker, Mark Johnson, Rocky, Scrapiron Johnson, heavyweight hopefuls.

Nov. 1996: Pole-Axed! Low Blows, Sinking Bowe, Ugly Show. Plus: Bowe-Golota I, Blinky Palermo, exciting fighters, Winky Wright, Joe Brown.

Dec. 1996: Our Spin On Roy Jones. Plus: heavyweight division, Olympic recap, Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rican fighters, Danny Hodge, Saad Muhammad.

Jan. 1997: Riddick Bowe's Promise. "This Time I'm Whipping Golota's Ass!" Plus: David Reid, Whitaker-Rivera II, meaningless records, Dick Tiger, Jess Willard.

March 1997 (92-Page Special): Mike Tyson. Can He Reclaim His Greatness? Plus: 10 greatest controversies, Teddy Atlas & Michael Moorer, Kostya Tszyu, George Chuvalo.

May 1997: De La Hoya-Whitaker: Can "Sweet Pea" Stop Oscar's March To Greatness? Plus: Fitzsimmons-Corbett, Junior Jones, Phillip Holiday, Don King, Zaragoza-McCullough.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

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Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

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	☐Nov/85	☐Apr/88	☐Feb/91	**All 6 $25**	☐Nov/96
☐Jan/83	☐Dec/85	☐May/88	☐Mar/91		☐Dec/96
☐Feb/83	**All 11 $40**	☐Aug/88	☐Apr/91	☐Apr/94	**All 9 $34**
☐Apr/83		☐Sep/88	☐May/91	☐May/94	☐Jan/97
☐May/83	☐Jan/86	☐Oct/88	☐Jun/91	☐Aug/94	☐Mar/97
☐Jun/83	☐Mar/86	☐Nov/88	☐Jul/91	☐Oct/94	☐May/97
☐Aug/83	☐Apr/86	**All 9 $34**	☐Aug/91	☐Nov/94	☐Jun/97
☐Sep/83	☐May/86		☐Oct/91	☐Dec/94	☐Jul/97
☐Nov/83	☐Jun/86	☐Jan/89	☐Nov/91	**All 6 $25**	☐Sep/97
All 8 $31	☐Jul/86	☐Feb/89	☐Dec/91		☐Oct/97
	☐Aug/86	☐Mar/89	**All 11 $40**	☐Jan/95	☐Nov/97
☐Feb/84	☐Sep/86	☐May/89		☐May/95	☐Hol/97
☐Jun/84	☐Dec/86	**All 4 $18**	☐Jan/92	☐Jun/95	**All 9 $34**
☐Jul/84	**All 9 $34**		☐May/92	☐Jul/95	
☐Aug/84		☐Jan/90	☐Jun/92	☐Aug/95	☐Jan/98
☐Oct/84	☐Apr/87	☐Feb/90	☐Jul/92	☐Oct/95	☐Feb/98
☐Dec/84	☐May/87	☐Mar/90	☐Aug/92	☐Nov/95	☐Mar/98
All 6 $25	☐Jun/87	☐Apr/90	☐Sep/92	☐Dec/95	☐Apr/98
	☐Jul/87	☐May/90	☐Oct/92	☐Wint/95	☐May/98
☐Jan/85	☐Aug/87	☐Jun/90	☐Nov/92	**All 9 $34**	☐Jun/98
☐Feb/85	☐Sep/87	☐Jul/90	**All 8 $31**		☐Jul/98
☐Apr/85	☐Nov/87	☐Aug/90		☐Feb/96	☐Aug/98
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NEW FACES

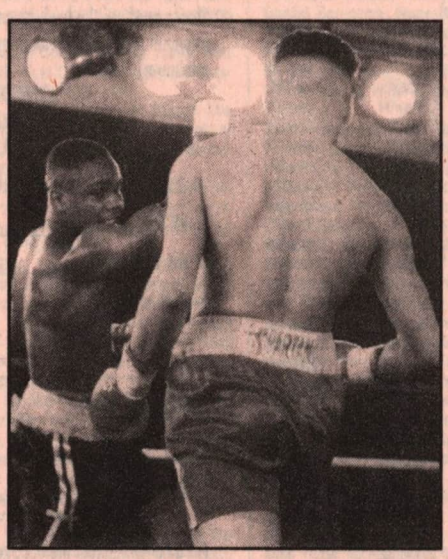
MICHAEL COVINGTON

Welterweight

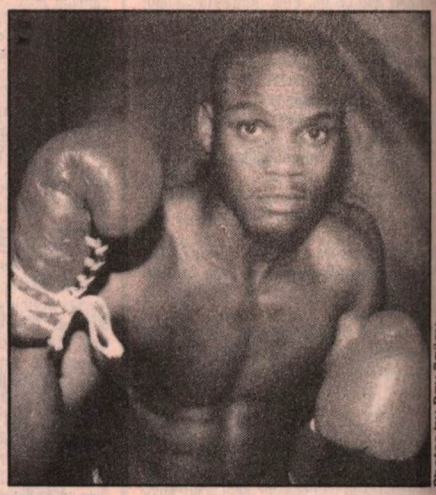
By Joe Santoliquito

Michael Covington has lived a life of contradiction. He was a poor inner-city kid raised on the rough streets of Trenton, New Jersey—and he played the cello. He wanted to project a tough image, hanging with his crew on the street corner. Except on weekends, he would travel and box or play his cello with a church choir. He's been incarcerated twice for dealing narcotics, yet speak to anyone who knows him and you'd find that hard to believe.

Covington, 26, was always looking for a definitive path, waiting for the good guy inside to emerge. He was the kingpin of dueling worlds. The 5'9" welterweight decided it was time to make a choice, to finally prove something *he's* known all along: that he's a good boxer. He's trying to provide for his two children, while at the same time compensate for the lost time he spent in jail.



Covington en route to a win over Rocky Rosas



Photos by Roy Bailey

Covington was once a distinguished amateur boxer with an 85-5 record who fought Sugar Shane Mosley at the 1992 Olympic Trials and lost a close decision. Mosley went one route, going on to the IBF lightweight title and a life of magazine covers and fights under bright lights. Covington took another.

In 1995, after building an 11-0 record as a pro, Covington was convicted of drug trafficking. It was his second offense, the first coming when Covington was a juvenile in the late-'80s. He was given a three-year sentence, placing him in a federal penitentiary in Mercer County, New Jersey, from May of '95 to December of '96. During his second stay behind bars, Covington learned a few things.

"I learned I needed to keep my butt out of there," Covington said. "I learned about people. I learned who was there for me, and who wasn't there for me. All my family, they were there. During my time, it was a mental thing. If you're not strong mentally, it could screw your head up.

"During my time, my father passed away,

(Continued on page 56)

PRO RECORD

1992		
July 28	Alfred Charity, Atlantic City	KO 1
Aug. 14	Henry Matos, Atlantic City	W 4
Oct. 20	Wayne Christian, Atlantic City	KO 1
Dec. 11	Genaro Andujar, New York City	KO 5
1993		
Feb. 18	Domingo Velez, New York City	W 6
Aug. 24	Lou Pagen, Atlantic City	W 6
1994		
Jan. 8	Rocky Rosas, New York City	W 6
Feb. 26	Ed Holley, Atlantic City	W 6
April 25	Jeff Graffius, Reading, PA	KO 4
June 28	Eric Mitchell, Seacaucus, NJ	W 6
1995		
Jan. 10	Francois Nkuado, Kenner, LA	KO 2
1998		
Mar. 6	Ahmed Lamb, Newark, NJ	KO 2
April 8	Daryl Baker, Newark	KO 2
April 18	Darnell Green, Alexandria, VA	KO 2
June 17	Benji Singleton, Newark	W 6
June 27	Harvey Kirby, Alexandria	KO 1
Oct. 1	Robert Muhammad, Atlantic City	W 6

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DREW	KOs
17	17	0	0	9

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RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

UP FOR THE CHALLENGE

Tonight you're gonna party like it's 1999—because, hey, it is! Before you know it, though, the '90s will be over. And you can be sure that those 10 tumultuous years won't be remembered as one of the Sweet Science's finest decades. The '60s gave us the prime of Ali, the '70s provided history's greatest heavyweight rivalries, and the '80s showcased Leonard, introduced Tyson, and made gloved combat as much of a fixture on Saturday afternoons as *American Bandstand*. The '90s? They were the years when boxing stopped demanding that the rest of the world pay attention to it.

The fight game may be run by a bunch of independent powerbrokers with conflicting interests, but during much of the '90s, the sport seemed to have been taken over by a cost-conscious corporation committed to downsizing. Compared to the roaring '80s, the '90s offered less in terms of number of superstars, talent in general, title-unification bouts, free TV action, coverage in the mainstream sports magazines and on the radio talkshows, and newspaper reporters working the beat full-time.

Everywhere you looked, less.

Less was Moorer—getting drilled by a 45-year-old fat guy with the game's grandest prize on the line. It was the biggest name on the marquee going away to prison for three years. It was NBC ignoring the sport, new strains of antibiotic-resistant ruling bodies forming to devalue already cheapened titles, and too many sensational matchups being suggested in THE RING, but not being contested in the ring.

Photo by Wayne J. Nadorf

With a shtick like this, who needs the fundamentals?

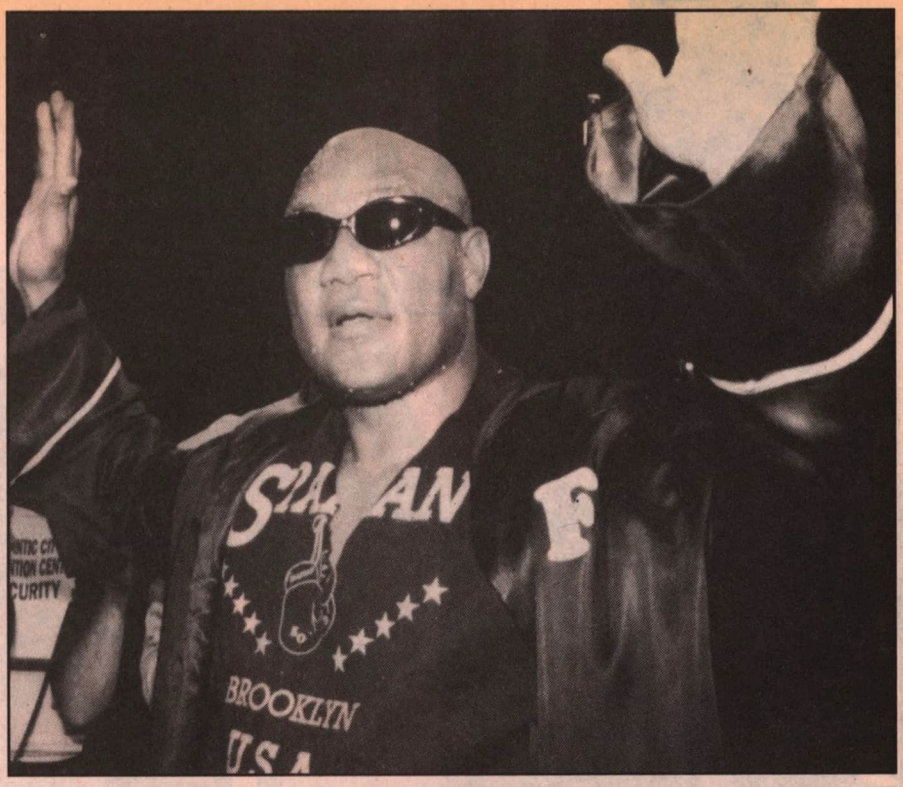
As it enters the new millennium, boxing can't continue to operate like this, can it? Sure it can. The fight game won't run itself completely out of business if it continues at its current pace. (And as we've learned, that fact is usually all that matters to those in the industry who keep getting richer.) What will happen, however, is that boxing will continue to lose social significance, its fan base will keep dwindling, and it will make increasingly fewer contributions to pro sports' treasure chest of unforgettable moments.

The challenges boxing faces as the decade draws to a close are enormous, and, considering the ingrained attitudes in the sport and

its current climate of chaos, most of those challenges are a long shot to be met. Is there a solid battle plan? If one was apparent, we wouldn't need to have this conversation now, would we? Here are the daunting tasks ahead:

For starters, boxing has to find a way to reverse this trend of diminishing talent. Look at the bottom half of the top 10 in most divisions and you'll see how shallow the talent pool is. It's a tough dilemma to solve, though, because there are fewer skilled trainers in the business than at any time in memory. For even many world-class fighters, defense has become an afterthought. Counterpunching? Don Turner, Evander Holyfield's trainer, told me that most of today's trainers don't even know how to teach it.

There's no motivation to become a well-rounded fighter because a one-dimensional performer—Arturo Gatti or Naseem Hamed, for instance—can win a version of a world title, make a comfortable living, and even become an HBO staple. Learning all aspects of the game takes patience. It means slowing the pace of a fighter's career, delaying the big paydays, and making the kid work harder. Suggest all that to a prospect you'd like to manage, and watch how quickly he shows you to the door.



Foreman: Part of boxing's problem

Another challenge will be to restore importance to the heavyweight crown, and the only way to do that is to make sure it gets unified and stays that way. Like the Kentucky Derby or a Wimbledon final, a heavyweight championship fight should be a major news event, no matter who's competing. Of course, we don't get a WBA Wimbledon final one month and a WBC Wimbledon final the next. If it takes me, someone on the fight beat, a few moments to remember who holds which heavyweight title, how can the average guy on the street keep things straight? And why should he bother?

Next on the tall-order list: Finding a spokesman, an ambassador who can preach boxing's virtues and be respected enough to be taken seriously by the media. Good luck with the search. Muhammad Ali is unable to do the job, Sugar Ray Leonard is unwilling, and Oscar De La Hoya is not yet established enough. George Foreman once seemed like an ideal choice, but he may have disqualified himself with his stubborn continuation of a ring career that serves as Exhibit A of what's wrong with his sport.

Somehow, boxing has to find its way back onto network television more frequently. For years, hearing the words, ABC's *Wide World Of Sports* put two images in my head: that poor ski jumper flying off the side of the take-off ramp, and great fights. But the network of Ali and Howard Cosell entered 1999 with absolutely no boxing on its schedule. If ABC airs no bouts, that means two out of the three major networks will have ignored the sport this year. We've heard of "minor" sports before, but this is crazy. Beach volleyball gets far more free TV coverage.

How are kids growing up in low-income families that are unable to afford cable, or in rural areas not wired for it, supposed to become boxing fans? By *reading* about great fights and colorful characters? If you've never seen Roy Jones' hand speed and Hamed's ring entrance, the best writers in the world aren't going to be able to tell you what they're like.

Most important of all the challenges facing boxing is this one: The sport must learn to respect itself. Too many people in the business view boxing as a gutter profession in which anything goes, there is nothing to lose, and, thus, bad behavior brings about no long-term consequences. A challenger simply refuses to fight in a heavyweight title bout. One maniac chomps on his opponent's ear. A riot erupts at Madison Square Garden. Some of these escapades may get boxing the tabloid headlines it wants, or even help sell a rematch or two, but if they make the editors at *ESPN The Magazine* decide to limit their boxing coverage—as was the case—the sport suffers in the long run.

When Ray Mercer was accused of trying to get Jesse Ferguson to take a dive a few years back, the reaction of many in the media was, "So what? Boxing doesn't have any integrity to protect." I've met enough good people in the business to know that's not true. Unfortunately, the voices of the good guys are never strong enough or stern enough to keep the bad guys in line.

Sadly, my crystal ball doesn't show great things awaiting boxing in the next decade, but maybe there's an HBO unification tournament, a charismatic heavyweight champion, the next *Rocky*, or an Olympic quartet the likes of Leonard, Howard Davis, and the Spinks Brothers out there somewhere. Perhaps The Muhammad Ali Boxing Reform Act, authored by Senators John McCain (R-Arizona) and Richard Bryan (D-Nevada) will reverse, or at least slow, some of the decline evident in the '90s. Let's hope so.

In the meantime, I refuse to get any more depressed. Tonight, I'm gonna party like it's 1979. ■

CAMERA CLICKS

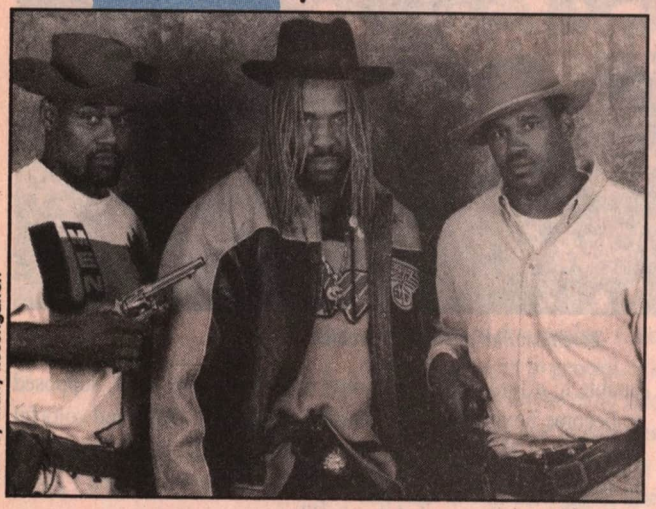


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

Gunfight at the mediocre corral: In promoting the December 8 all-heavyweight pay-per-view, three of the big guns on the show donned cowboy gear and nasty snarls. Pictured (from left) are journeyman extraordinaire Jesse "The Boogie Man" Ferguson, asthmatic also-ran Shannon Briggs, and recently kayoed ex-footballer Alonzo Highsmith.

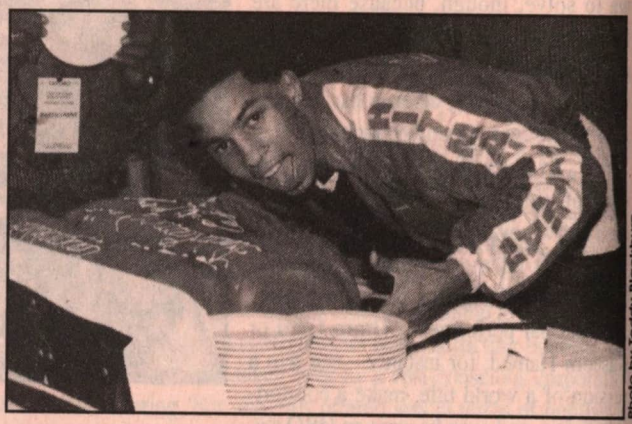


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Not wanting to risk doing any damage to his mitts so close to fight time, Hector Camacho Jr. opted to eat his birthday cake without his hands. It was "Muncho Time" as the junior welterweight prospect celebrated his 21st.

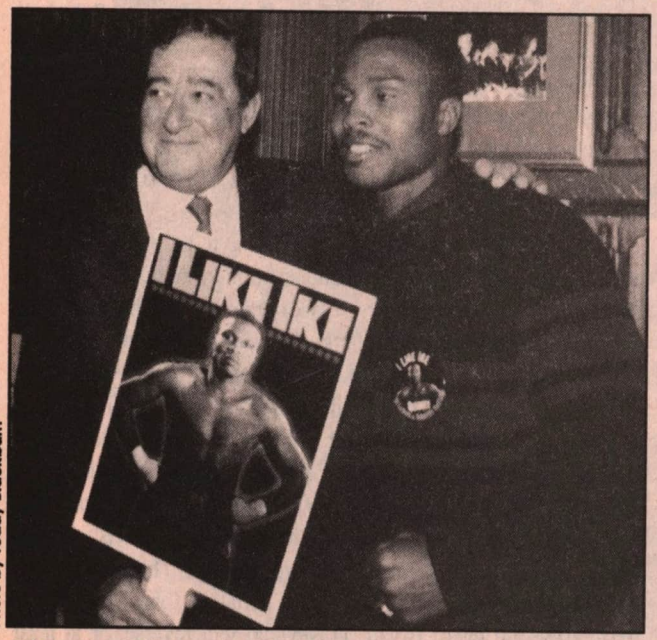


Photo by Teddy Blackburn

Bob Arum may like Ike today, but he'll tell you he was lying about that if Quartey knocks off Oscar De La Hoya in February. Gamblers may be liking the 3-1 underdog quite a bit thanks to reports of how great he's looked in the gym as compared to "The Golden Boy."

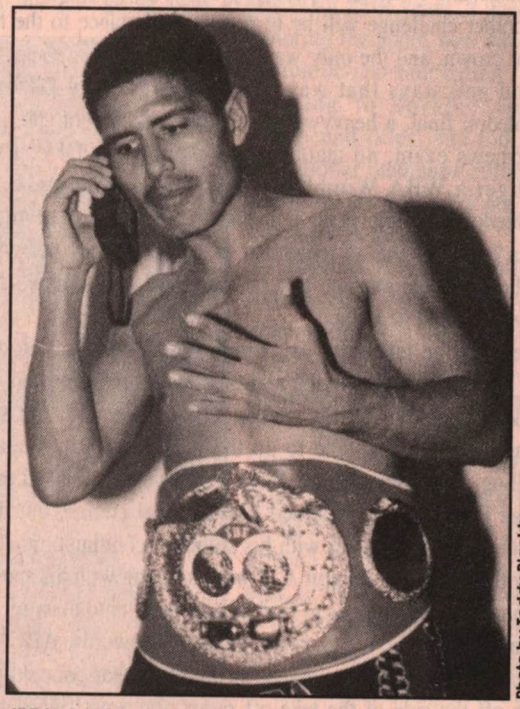


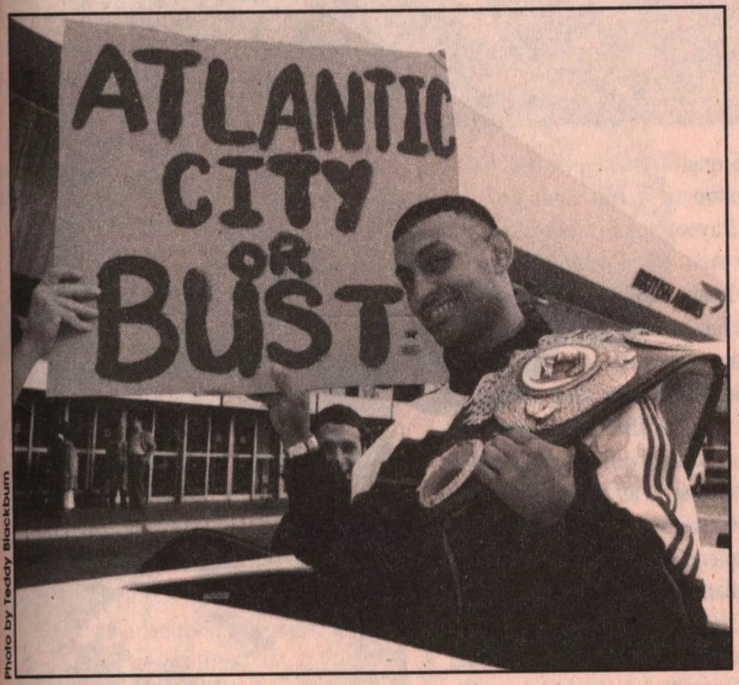
Photo by Teddy Blackburn

IBF junior lightweight champion Roberto Garcia gets a congratulatory call from President Clinton after his rousing up-from-the-canvas victory over Ramon Ledon in October. The Prez went on to ask Garcia for advice on how to get up from the verge of defeat and keep his title.

It's never too late to exact revenge. Former WBA lightweight champ Hilmer Kenty winds up to slug the man who took the title from him, Sean O'Grady. Rumor has it that a rematch was discussed as the main undercard attraction in support of the George Foreman-Larry Holmes fight.

Olympic gold medalist David Reid doesn't discriminate when it comes to looking for people to punch. That's "The American Dream's" girlfriend, Lynne North, taking a mock hook after Reid's October fight with James "Cowboy" Coker.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

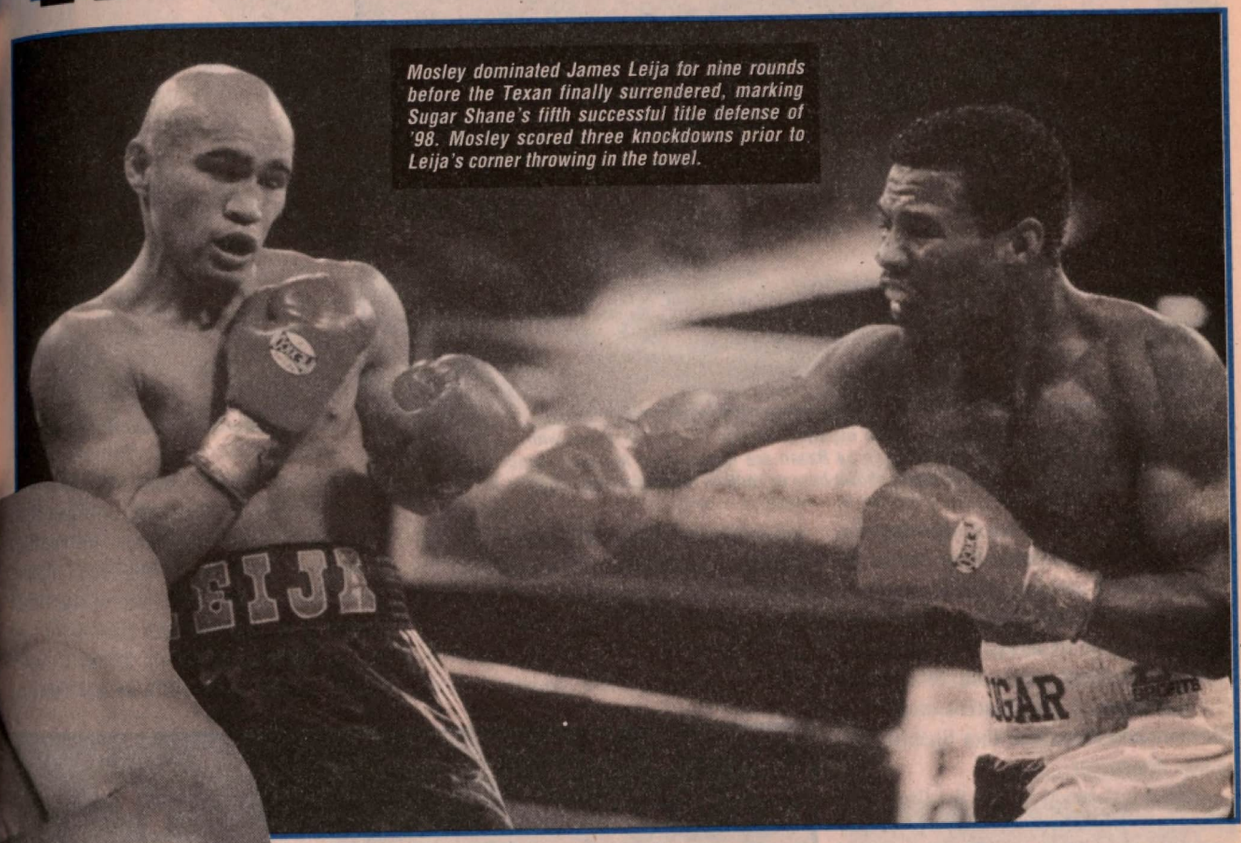


In this case, the "either/or" turned out to be a "both." Naseem Hamed's first fight in Atlantic City was a total bust, as "The Prince" showboated his way to a dull, lustily booed decision win over Wayne McCullough on Halloween night.

The world's tallest welterweight, Curtis Cokes, used his 300-meter reach advantage to subdue smaller opponents and reign as world champion from 1966 to '69. Just after this photo was taken, Cokes actually fought the Eiffel Tower in a non-title bout, but had to retire in the second round after suffering a broken right hand.

SUGAR SHANE MOSLEY'S HIT LIST

The Lightweight Champ Has A Heavy Agenda



Mosley dominated James Leija for nine rounds before the Texan finally surrendered, marking Sugar Shane's fifth successful title defense of '98. Mosley scored three knockdowns prior to Leija's corner throwing in the towel.

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

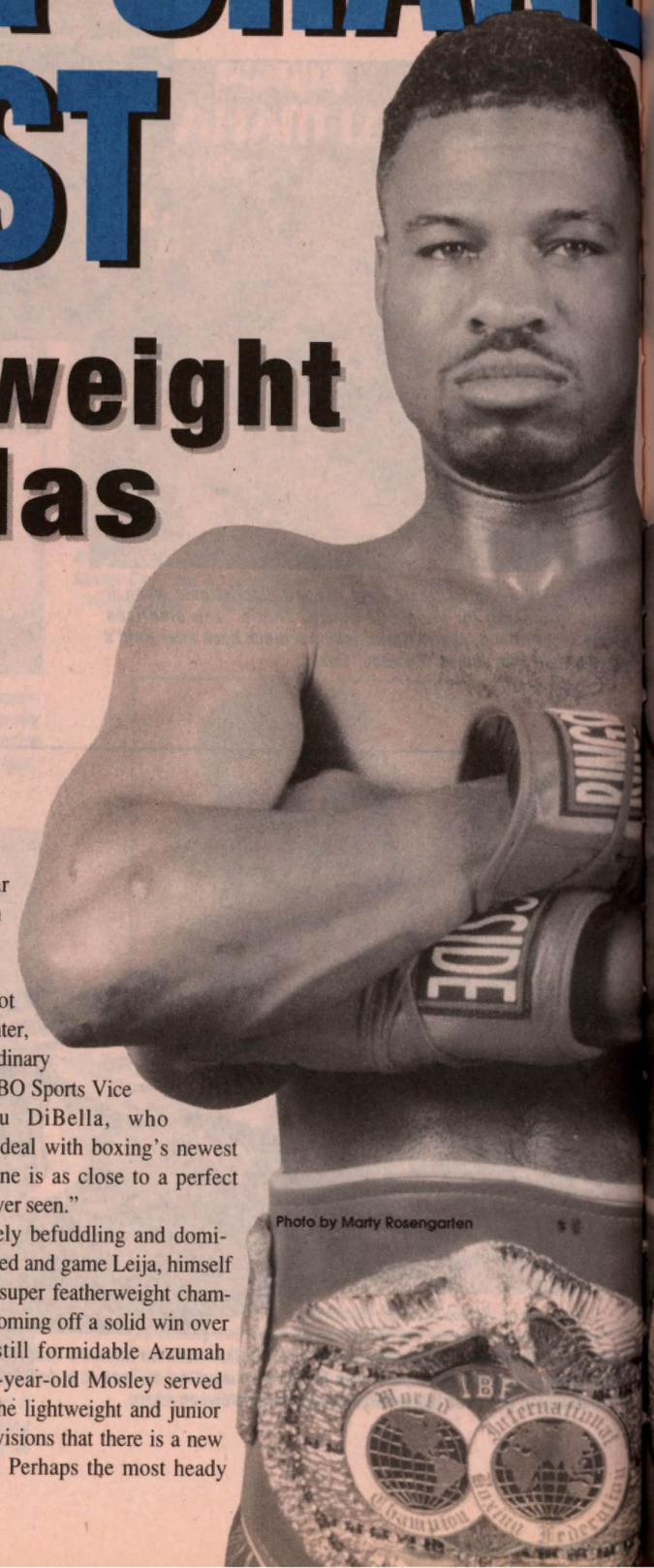


Photo by Marty Rosengarten

By Robert Mladinich

After IBF lightweight champion Sugar Shane Mosley dispatched challenger Jesse James Leija with his customary aplomb by rendering him unable to continue after the ninth round on November 13, it was announced that he had signed a multi-year, multi-fight deal with HBO Sports. As long as the undefeated Mosley, 30-0 (28), keeps winning, the deal will be worth millions of dollars. Although a gastrointestinal problem caused him to look less than stellar in his title-winning effort against Phillip Holiday only 15 months earlier, Mosley wasted no time in electrifying the boxing world by scoring six knockouts in six consecutive title defenses. It seems that the more he fights, the more he is being compared to the two other boxing greats with whom he shares his moniker, Sugar Ray Robinson and Sugar Ray Leonard.

"Shane is not just a great fighter, he is an extraordinary fighter," said HBO Sports Vice President Lou DiBella, who announced the deal with boxing's newest superstar. "Shane is as close to a perfect fighter as I've ever seen."

By completely befuddling and dominating the talented and game Leija, himself a former WBC super featherweight champion who was coming off a solid win over the aging but still formidable Azumah Nelson, the 27-year-old Mosley served notice to both the lightweight and junior welterweight divisions that there is a new sheriff in town. Perhaps the most heady compliment paid to him was an inadvertent one. After the fight, Leija's manager, Lester Bedford, approached Kery Davis, the director of programming for HBO Sports, and asked, "Did my kid look good enough tonight for you to consider bringing him back on HBO?" When Davis said it was very possible, Bedford had one other request: "Against a human being next time?"

Leija supplied another offhanded compliment when he lamented about the fact that although his career record now stands at 37-4-2 (15), he is 0-3 on HBO. "I've fought on HBO three times, and I've lost three times, because every time they put me in with someone like Godzilla," he said. The other losses were to Oscar De La Hoya and an earlier bout to Nelson.

Mosley's meteoric rise to boxing's stratosphere has as much to do with his immense physical talents as it does with his engaging personality, true appreciation of his fame and the fans he has cultivated, immense media savvy, and genuine love for his vocation. Being named in the same sentence as such greats as Robinson and Leonard brings him a tremendous sense of pride and joy in his accomplishments. As talented as he is, and as quick as he is to tell you about it, there is not a bombastic bone in his body. He realizes that the key to the ring legacy he so clearly envisions for himself is to clean out the lightweight division, then move on to the junior welterweights where there is no shortage of potential superfights.

Prior to signing a contract with Cedric Kushner in 1996, Mosley experienced promotional woes that retarded his early career development. As a result, he is in quite a hurry to make up for lost time, as his six quick defenses will attest. Mosley realizes that he will soon have to leave the relatively safe confines of the lightweight division to make his mark in boxing history. Being the realist that he is makes him acutely aware that he will not be able to get by on the raw power, blinding speed, and spectacular athleticism that has garnered him so much success to date. In his own head, he has compiled an unofficial "hit list" of opponents that he hopes will propel him to boxing immortality:

Cesar Bazan: This is the first name to leave the lips of HBO executives, as well

WBC lightweight champ Cesar Bazan is the opponent Mosley is most obsessed with, as title unification and revenge for negative comments made by Bazan are foremost on Mosley's mind. Sugar Shane is confident he will beat the lanky Mexican, shown here en route to beating Stevie Johnston for the title.

as everyone in the Mosley camp when discussing future prospects. Both realize the importance of unifying titles in creating a fistic legacy, and the WBC champion from Mexico is the most accessible. From a personal motivational standpoint, Mosley said he was angered by negative comments Bazan made about him in a Spanish-language newspaper.

"That just added fuel to the fire," said Mosley. "I'm always respectful to my opponents, so there is no reason they can't be, too."

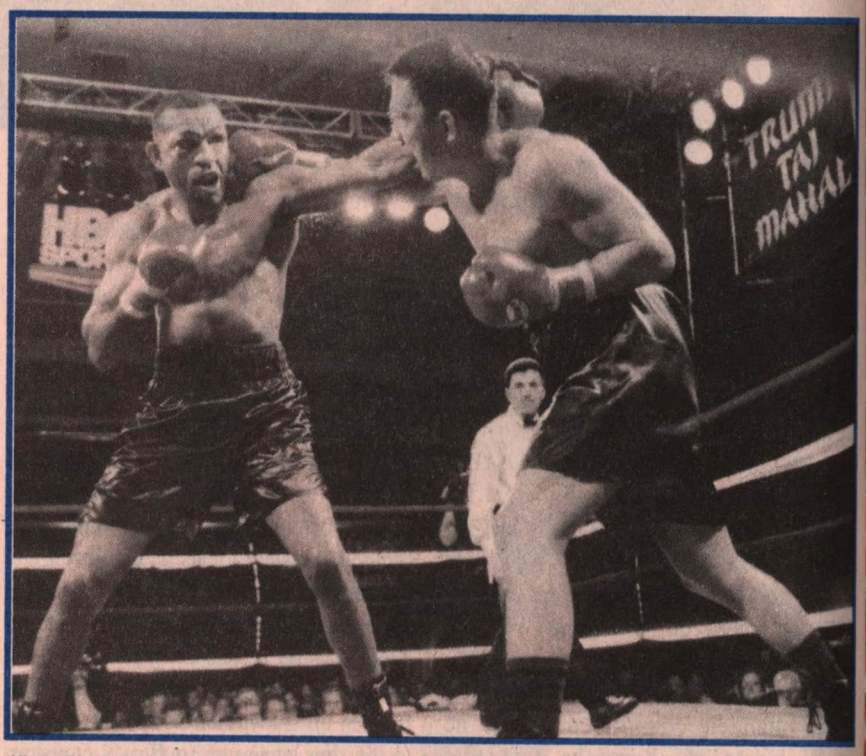
Although the 6' Bazan looked extremely tall when beating the 5'5" Stevie Johnston for the title, he is only three inches taller than Mosley and not nearly as quick or powerful. Mosley believes he could counteract any strategy employed by the always-busy Bazan with the speed and power he has honed to perfection. A key component of the arsenal he would utilize against the Mexican would be the effective use of uppercuts on the inside.

Jean-Baptiste Mendy: Mosley looks at the WBC champion from France strictly as a means to an end. Mendy, a technically sound but relatively anonymous titlist, has no marquee value outside of his native country, and would probably demand a king's ransom to fight Mosley in the United States where the fight would make the most sense. Mosley's father, Jack, who serves as his trainer and manager, said fighting Bazan is much more feasible because of the expense involved in flying Mendy in, then having to pay him a fortune on top of it.

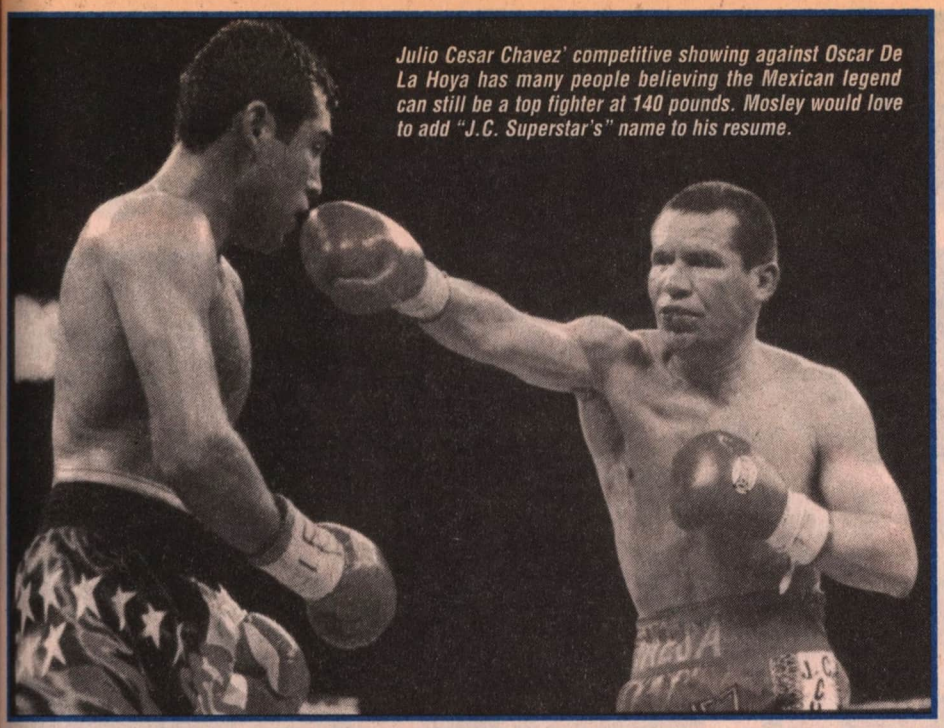
About the only benefit Mosley would get from beating Mendy, providing he's already topped Bazan, would be to say he was the undisputed lightweight champion prior to moving up in weight. While that means less and less to the boxing public in this age of spurious titles, it is extremely important to Mosley.

"Roberto Duran, Pernell Whitaker, and Mike Tyson all unified their divisions, and they are considered great fighters," he said. "That's just something you have to do to be considered great. You have to beat everybody that was available at the time. If I beat Mendy and Bazan, then I would look at the lightweight division through the rearview mirror."

Vince Phillips: This much-ballyhooed fight was talked about with great enthusiasm for several months, but the possibility of it happening seems to have waned. Phillips, the IBF junior welterweight champion, is reportedly walking around between fights in the 180-pound range, and there is much speculation that he will never fight at 140 pounds again. Still, it is a fight that both Mosley and DiBella would love to make. Much of Mosley's desire to fight Phillips stems from the fact that Phillips



Vince Phillips is generally regarded as the best at 140 pounds by virtue of his knockout of Kostya Tszyu and three subsequent title defenses. If Phillips can get back down to 140 pounds, his power could prove to be a tremendous obstacle for Mosley to overcome.



Julio Cesar Chavez' competitive showing against Oscar De La Hoya has many people believing the Mexican legend can still be a top fighter at 140 pounds. Mosley would love to add "J.C. Superstar's" name to his resume.

won the title by destroying Kostya Tszyu. Throughout their interrelated amateur careers, Mosley had always viewed Tszyu with a bit of awe, and was surprised at the beating he took from Phillips.

"That really impressed me," said Mosley. "Vince is very strong and powerful, but I would never let him plant himself. I have the ability to offset anything he does. I have a great chin, but if I get hit and hurt, I could use my speed to outbox him."

It would serve Mosley well to be wary of the powerful right hand of Phillips. Leija managed to land numerous rights, and there is no doubt that Phillips hits a heck of a lot harder than Leija.

Julio Cesar Chavez: When Mosley looks into his crystal ball, he sees this fight looming large in his future. He worked as a sparring partner for Chavez in 1992, and says he was regularly referred to by the Chavez camp as "Little Meldrick Taylor." He insists he did more than hold his own against Chavez and has matured physically and mentally since then, while Chavez has gotten older and slower. Still, says Mosley, "he's got a dynamite right hand and will be dangerous at 140 pounds for a long time. But Oscar proved that you can beat him with maturity and strength."

While Mosley worries that a victory over the faded champion would have people saying Chavez was old and washed-up, he is certain that he would learn valuable lessons from the wily veteran and garner instant credibility at the higher weight in the process.

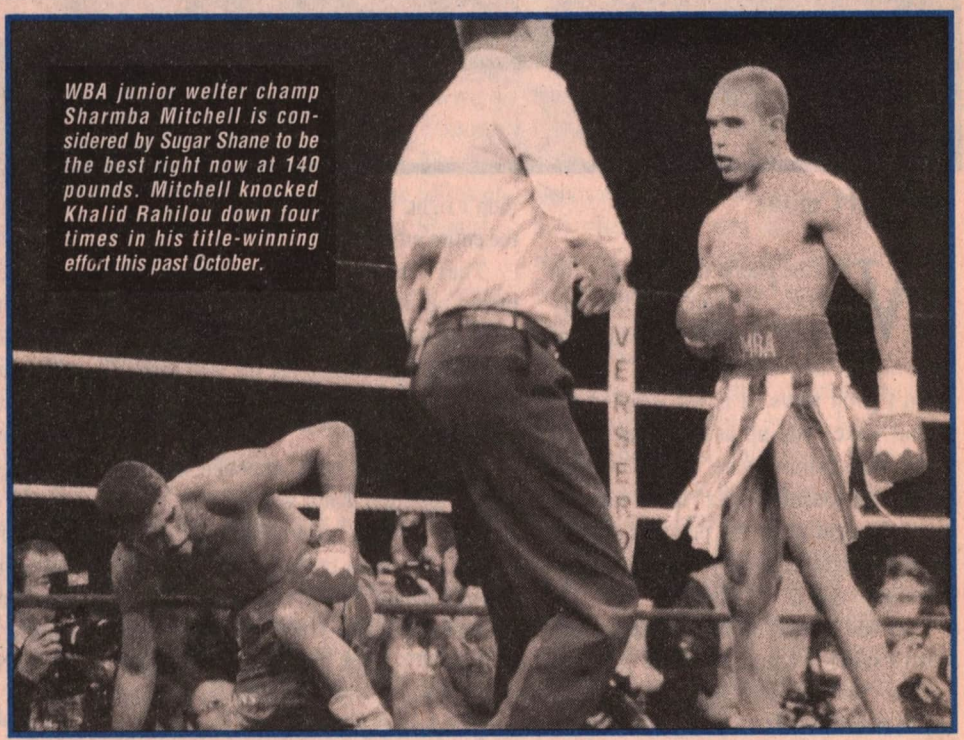
"Chavez looked good and was very combative with Oscar at 147 pounds," said Mosley. "At 140 pounds, he will still be dangerous, and a name like his on your record can never hurt."

Kostya Tszyu and Miguel Angel Gonzalez: Regardless of who might win the Tszyu-Gonzalez fight, if it ever comes off, Mosley envisions both of them on his calendar in the next year. He considers Tszyu a very physical fighter who was much more dangerous as an amateur than he is as a pro, and Gonzalez a consummate professional. He believes a fight with either would be a great learning experience because of their differences in styles, and would solidify his own standing in the division.

"Tszyu is the most talked-about guy at that weight, and Miguel is the strong, silent type," said Mosley. "I can outbox and outsmart Tszyu by doing a lot of bobbing and weaving, and I can attack Gonzalez offensively because I have more speed than he does."

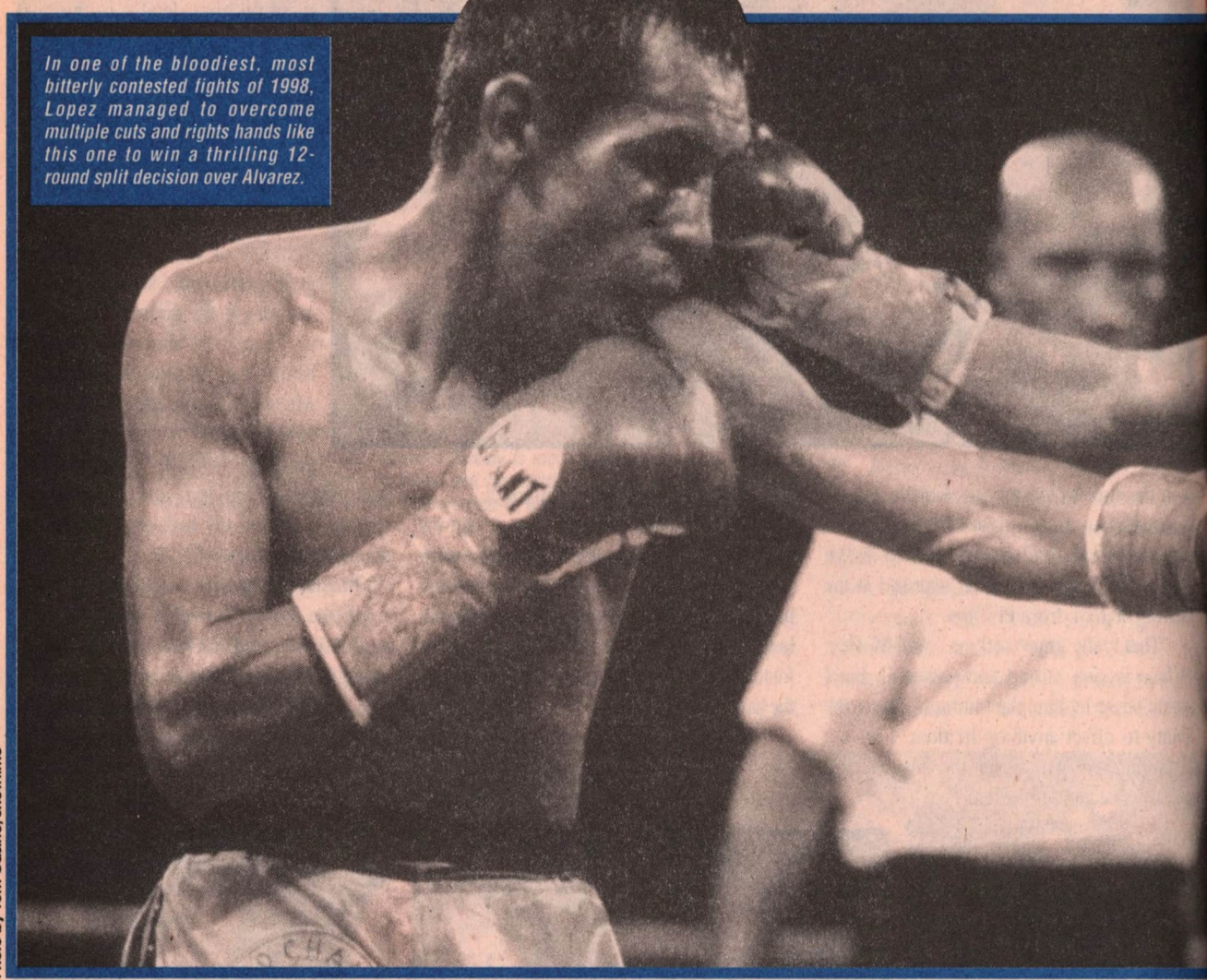
Mosley admits he would have to outthink the savvy Gonzalez while fighting aggressively, and if Gonzalez was strong enough to survive a Sugar Shane attack, he could always revert back to boxing. Mosley makes no bones about the fact that he will have to "change styles all the time

(Continued on page 57)



WBA junior welter champ Sharmba Mitchell is considered by Sugar Shane to be the best right now at 140 pounds. Mitchell knocked Khalid Rahilou down four times in his title-winning effort this past October.

RICARDO LOPEZ



In one of the bloodiest, most bitterly contested fights of 1998, Lopez managed to overcome multiple cuts and rights hands like this one to win a thrilling 12-round split decision over Alvarez.

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime

By Nigel Collins

When the phone rang at 1 a.m. on Friday, November 13, Jay Larkin, executive producer of *Showtime Championship Boxing*, knew it wasn't good news. It never is when the phone wakes you up at that time of the night. Was Larkin aware, the caller wondered, that Ricardo Lopez' father had just nixed the deal made the previous day for his son to fight Rosendo Alvarez at a compromise weight of 115 pounds?

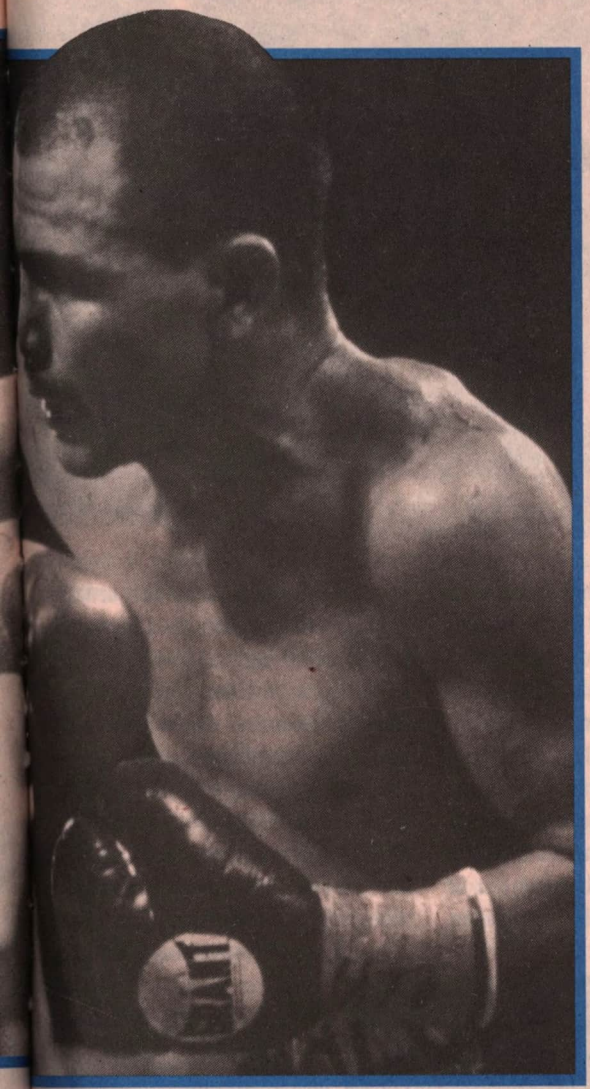
"At one o'clock in the morning, there wasn't much I could do about it," said Larkin. "But my staff in Las Vegas had instruction that if Lopez and Alvarez didn't fight, they were to pull the plug on the entire production."

That's how close what eventually turned out to be one of the best fights of 1998 came to being canceled. As far as Showtime was concerned, the first sign of a problem came at the 5 p.m. weigh-in on Thursday afternoon.

"The scale has been calibrated, so there was no question that it was accurate," said Nevada boxing commissioner Marc Ratner. "Ricardo came in at 103½, 1½ pounds under the division limit, but Rosendo weighed 108¼. The rules say he's got two hours to take off the weight, but [Alvarez' adviser] Luis Spada immediately told me that Rosendo had been in the sauna, done everything he could, and this was as low as he could go. They weren't going to come back in an hour, or two hours. This was it.

"Now it was up to Ricardo whether he still wanted to fight. I made it very clear that he would be fighting for the vacated WBA crown [that Alvarez had just lost at the scales]. I told everybody that I would be glad to re-weigh them the next day at 1:30 p.m., but I wanted a maximum that they could gain because I didn't want somebody coming in at 118 or 119 or 120 pounds. So both sides agreed to 115, but unbeknownst to me, later on that night, Ricardo's father said, 'No, we're not going to fight.' When I found out about it the

ROSENDO ALVAREZ II



The Great Fight That Almost Didn't Happen

next morning, I said, 'Look, I'll be there at 1:30. If you guys don't want to fight, fine. The card will be off.'"

That afternoon, Rosendo showed up and weighed in at 114, but Ratner also had to weigh Lopez (who had apparently overruled his father and decided to fight) to make sure he'd also gained enough weight to make the match possible. If Lopez was still a strawweight, the fight would have to be canceled. So Ratner dispatched his chief inspector, Chuck Sledge, to carry the scale to Lopez' hotel room, where "El Finito" weighed 112. The fight was on.

While Showtime and the Nevada State Athletic Commission claimed they had no idea that something was amiss until the day before the fight, certain members of the press were well aware that Alvarez was struggling.

"A week before the fight, Alvarez' camp told me that he was having a very hard time making weight," said Ricardo Jimenez, sports editor of *La Opinion*, America's largest Spanish-language daily.

The fact that Jimenez knew about Alvarez' dilemma in advance makes you wonder why Showtime, the commission, and promoter Don King were in the dark until practically the last minute, and certainly discredits the hackneyed tale Alvarez' camp spun with about their fighter's weight being fine according to the scales in his hotel room.

Despite all the last-minute hassles, the Lopez-Alvarez rematch was highly anticipated by all who had seen their first encounter, March 7, 1998, in Mexico City. Until then, WBC strawweight king Lopez had breezed to a record-breaking 20 successful defenses and was widely considered, pound-for-pound, one of today's finest fighters. The only criticism of his lengthy reign was that there was no one around good enough to give him a tough fight. WBA minimumweight champion Alvarez quickly changed all that, knocking Lopez down with a booming right hand in the second round. Lopez beat the count and fought back with vigor, but what was developing into an outstanding fight came to an abrupt and unsatisfactory halt when Lopez was badly cut over his right eye by an accidental headbutt. The resulting seventh-round technical draw left everybody with a bad taste in their mouth, but when the proud Lopez said he would make no further defenses of the title until he fought a rematch with his Nicaraguan rival, fans knew they had something special in store as soon as the Mexican's cut healed.

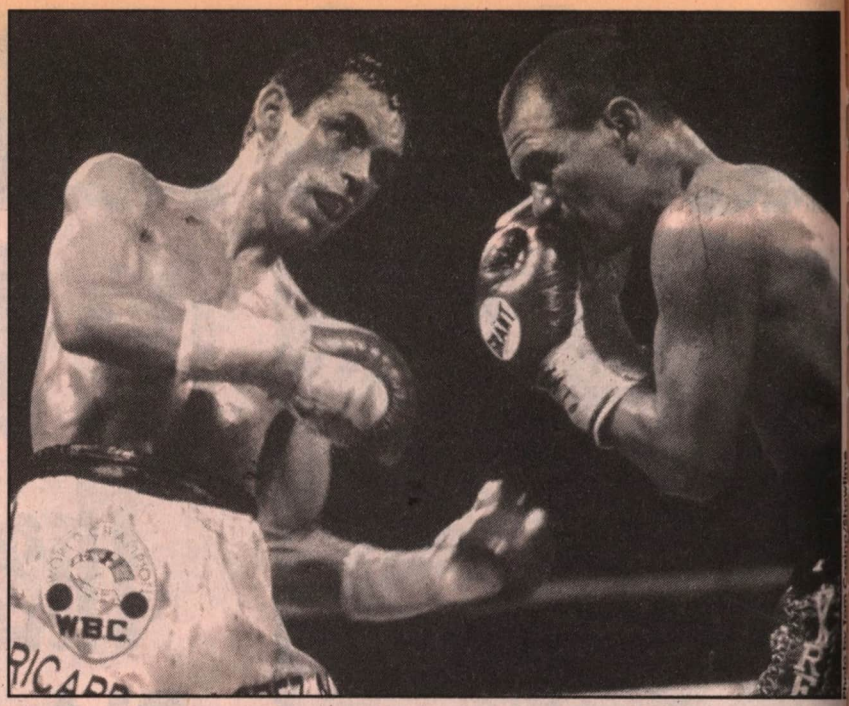
Lopez was the favorite with the crowd at the Las Vegas Hilton Theater, but there was also a small but vocal contingent of Alvarez fans on hand, some waving the flag of Nicaragua. Once the opening bell sounded and the fight began, both groups had plenty to cheer about.

As in their first fight, Alvarez was the aggressor, and remained so throughout most of the fight. He constantly bore into Lopez, applying relentless pressure, scoring with hard, compact shots whenever he could close the gap sufficiently to connect. Lopez kept his distance well enough the first two rounds by keeping Alvarez on the end of his jab and dropping in pretty combinations from time to time. But Alvarez broke through in the third and fourth, raking his rival with sizzling punches to the head.

After four rounds of bristling action, it looked like the man from Managua might prove too strong for Lopez, especially at the junior bantamweight level. The Mexican had spent most of the fourth round in retreat, but he rallied strongly the early part of the fifth, pelting the onrushing Alvarez with clusters of combinations. Then, as Alvarez backed his foe into the ropes, the fighters banged heads, and Lopez came away with blood dripping from a cut over his right eye. Fortunately, this time the gash wasn't serious enough to stop the fight, and hostilities continued.

In the sixth, Lopez went all out to try to stall Alvarez' attack. He boxed beautifully and repeatedly scored with fluid punches from both hands. Still, Alvarez kept coming, ripping hurtful-looking shots to the body to make it a very close round.

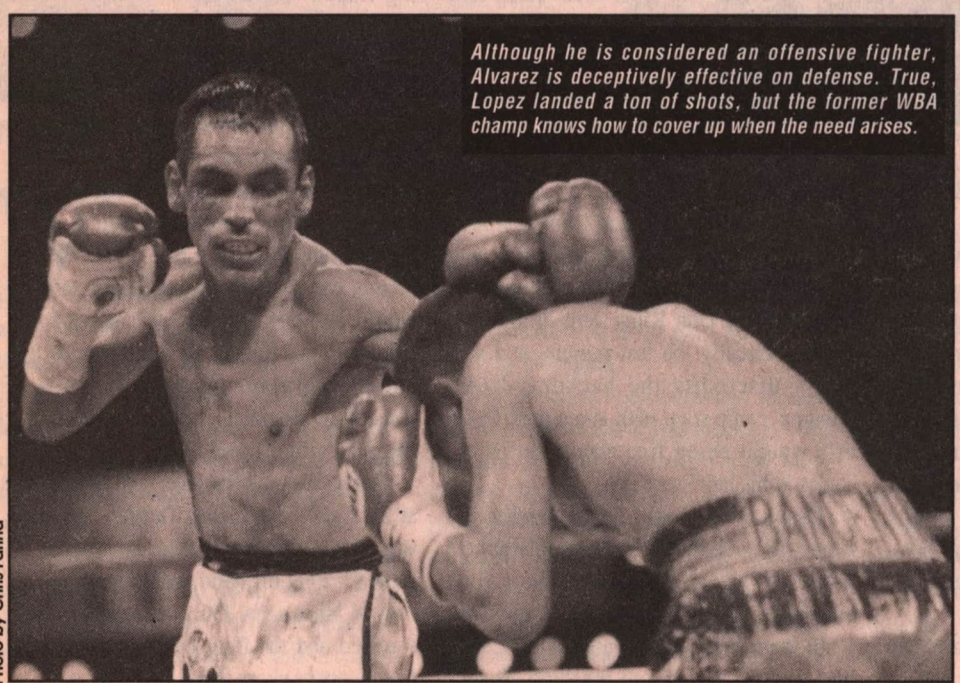
Over the next four rounds, Lopez generally managed to stay two or three punches ahead of Alvarez, but it was never easy.



Lopez fires a left uppercut at Alvarez, who never looked close to going down despite the punishment he took during their brutal, give-and-take encounter.

Alvarez absorbed Lopez' best shots with barely a blink, and the theory that he failed to make weight because he hadn't trained properly was swiftly debunked. He maintained a rapid-fire pace despite the punches he fielded and was always there, right in his adversary's face, ready to take advantage of any momentary defensive letdown on Lopez' part.

What was remarkable about the fight was that regardless of the number of punches given and received by both men, it never degenerated into an artless slugging match. The skill level on both men's part remained high, and while the beauty of Lopez' graceful movement, perfect balance, and seamless combinations was easy to see, the less obvious skills of the persistent, ever-pressing Alvarez were also on display. He constantly strove to cut down the ring, forcing Lopez into positions where he could unload his big guns. And even though Lopez was piling up the points, Alvarez was doing a lot of damage whenever he connected. Piece by piece, the Mexican's handsome face was becoming a mass of nicks, cuts, and abrasions, as both Alvarez' fists and head slammed home with regularity.



Although he is considered an offensive fighter, Alvarez is deceptively effective on defense. True, Lopez landed a ton of shots, but the former WBA champ knows how to cover up when the need arises.

Photo by Chris Farina

Alvarez threw his already intense attack into high gear in the 10th, and enjoyed his best round in some time. Suddenly, Lopez, bleeding freely from several cuts, was taking punches he'd avoided earlier and seemed in danger of being overwhelmed. Alvarez' assault continued in the 11th, but just when it looked as if Lopez was ready to go, he almost stole the round with a late rally that left spectators breathless.

Although Lopez appeared to hold a slight edge going into the

Photo by Tom Casino/Showtime
Photo by Chris Farina

Fans rise to their feet and cheer at the conclusion of the bout. It had been such a close fight, both Lopez and Alvarez were sure they'd won before the decision in Lopez' favor was announced.

final round, it was too close for comfort, and Alvarez still had a chance of pulling it out if he could put together a big round.

The 12th proved a fitting finale to what had been a magnificent fight, an electrifying microcosm of the 11 rounds that had preceded it. Both warriors let it all hang out in an attempt to sway the judges. Lopez' dazzling array of punches was met by an equally effective series of potent blows from Alvarez. Just when one seemed ready to pull ahead, the other raged back to turn things around again. Fortunes changed repeatedly over the next three minutes, and when the bell sounded, the only thing for sure was that it had been a fabulous fight.

Judge Silvestre Abainza (The Philippines) voted for Alvarez, 115-113, but was overruled by Larry O'Connell (England) and Jerry Roth (USA), who scored it for Lopez by tallies of 116-114 and 116-112, respectively. THE RING also scored it for Lopez, by a 116-114 margin. The referee was Richard Steele (USA).

"I felt good, but Alvarez was even stronger than when we fought the first time," said Lopez, 47-0-1 (35). "But I'm done at 105 pounds. My next fight will be for the 108-pound championship, against [WBC light flyweight champ Saman] Sorjaturong."

Even though Lopez knocked out Sorjaturong in '93, the Thai slugger has gone undefeated since then and should provide the Mexican with a very tough introduction to his new weight class. And if Lopez gets past Sorjaturong again? Well, Alvarez, 24-1-1 (16), would love another crack at him, which Larkin said Showtime would be delighted to broadcast. But before we rush headlong into the future, let's take a little time to savor a fight that more than lived up to expectations.

There's an excellent chance that history will look back upon the second Lopez-Alvarez duel as the defining moment in Lopez' career. Alvarez played Joe Frazier to Lopez' Ali, and both men brought out the very best the other had to offer. Critics will never again be able to say that, sure, Lopez is a good fighter, but there's nobody around to test him. Alvarez pushed him to the brink of defeat, and Lopez responded with the skills, artistry, and courage of an all-time great.

And to think it almost didn't happen. ■

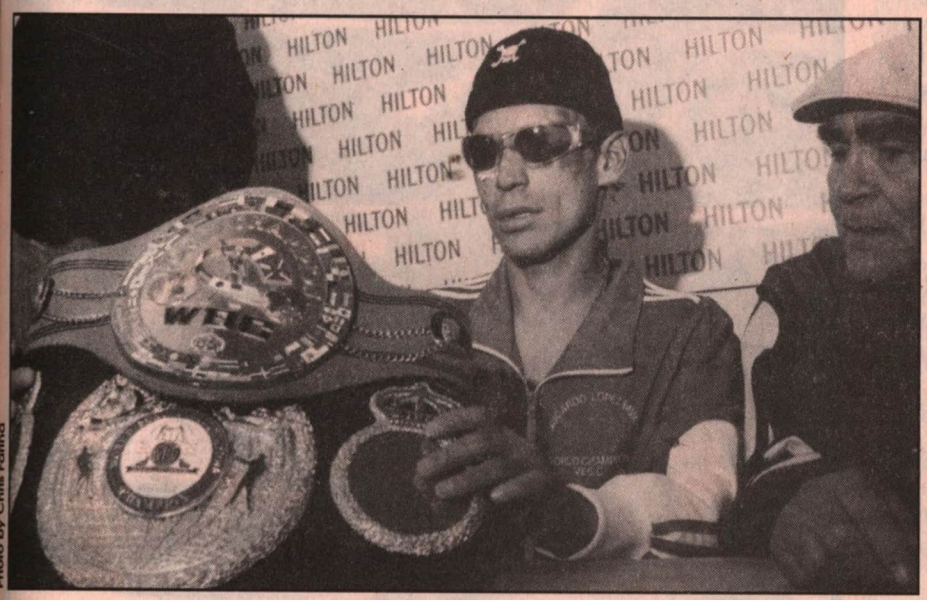


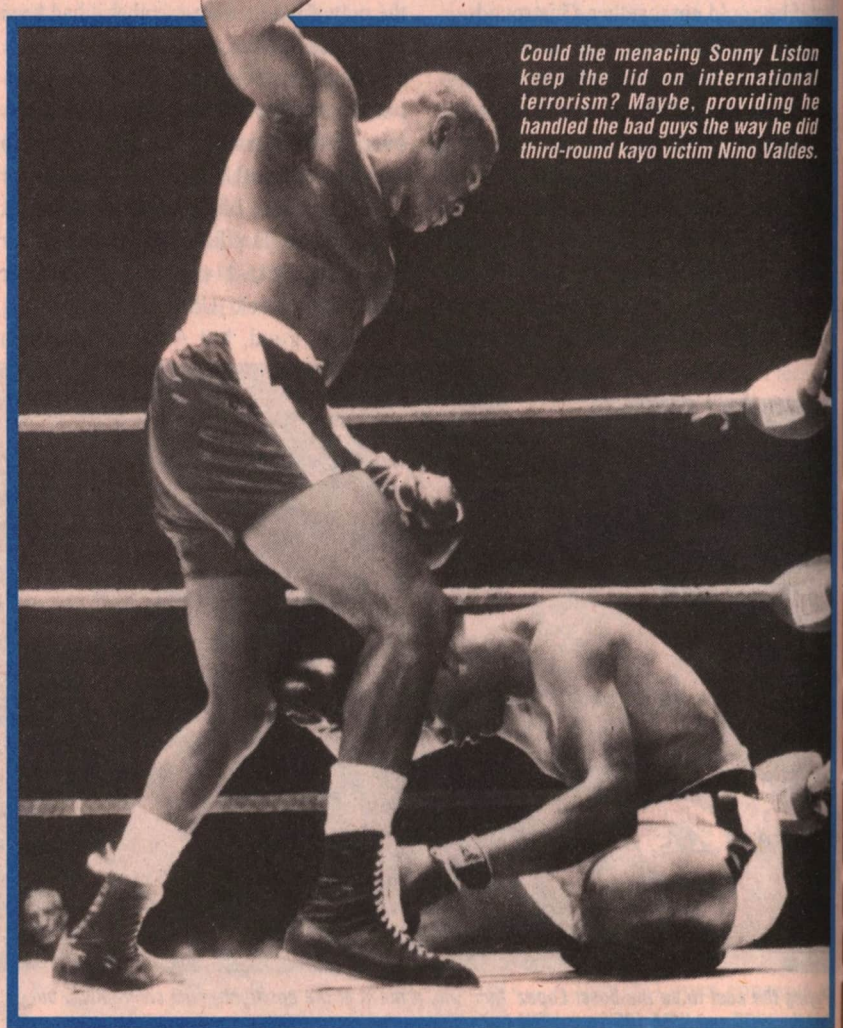
Photo by Chris Farina

Paying the cost to be the boss: Lopez' face was a mess at the postfight press conference, but at least he had the WBC and WBA 105-pound title belts to show for his suffering.

IF A WRESTLER CAN BE GOVERNOR ...

WHY NOT A PUGILISTIC PRESIDENT?

By Ivan Goldman

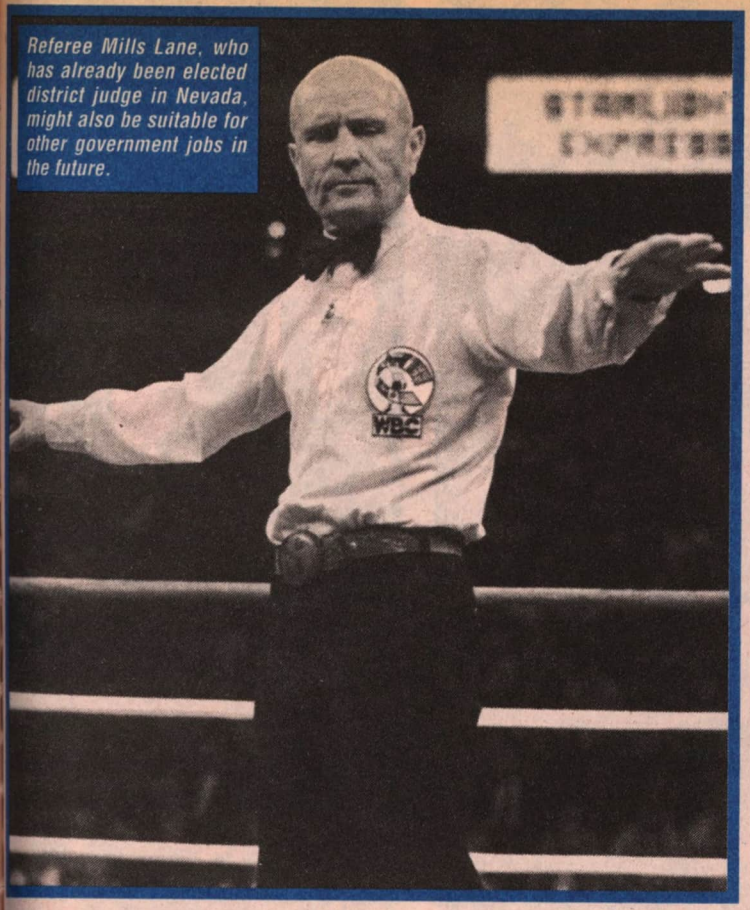


Could the menacing Sonny Liston keep the lid on international terrorism? Maybe, providing he handled the bad guys the way he did third-round kayo victim Nino Valdes.

Jesse "The Body" Ventura has been attracting heaps of media attention since getting himself elected Governor of Minnesota. Everybody seems to love the idea of a pro wrestler transferring his combat skills from the wrestling arena to a political one. Catapulted into office by a coalition of jokesters, new voters, and fed-up citizens who figured any change is better than what they are used to, Ventura promises to shake up Minnesota government like a daiquiri in a blender. He's already collected well over the usual 15 minutes of fame and at the same time placed frozen, far-off Minnesota square in the limelight of big-time media.

But if you think about it, there are plenty of characters in the boxing world, from both the past and present, who could also lend their particular expertise to government affairs. In fact, if you really wanted to spice up politics and government with new recruits, there's no better place to turn than the Sweet Science, which offers a multifarious cast of villains, heroes, con men, and comics that is second to none. Here are just a few of the intriguing possibilities:

•For Chief of the FBI's Anti-Terror Division: Sonny Liston, of course. Assume



Referee Mills Lane, who has already been elected district judge in Nevada, might also be suitable for other government jobs in the future.

Only in America. Don King has always portrayed himself as a patriotic American, so it wouldn't be too much of a stretch for the promoter to assume a role in the U.S. government.

or just one moment that you are a typical errorist nasty just itching to inflict big-ime hurt on the United States. Now, ould you still want to mess with the Land f the Great Satan if you knew it was oing to send Liston after you? End of tory.

•Then there's heavyweight Chris Byrd. lthough he doesn't exactly rain down ter-or on his opponents with his pitty-pat unches, in a ring that's approximately 20-eet square, opponents can't hit him with a andful of gravel. This guy is clearly cut ut to be Secretary of Defense.

In addition, when it comes to getting aid for doing nothing significant, the non-ensational Byrd may be the most accom-lished fighter out there. Therefore, he ould be the most qualified Vice President nce Dan Quayle.

•Mills Lane, whose resume lists the ositions of pro middleweight boxer, awyer, Nevada courtroom judge, and TV ost, has always been a decisive referee ith a sharp eye for underhanded moves. e's an obvious candidate for the Supreme ourt. But Lane has even more skills we ould call upon. Remember the night he tossed Bernard "The Executioner" Hopkins out of the ring without even trying? Think how great he'd be as a Secret Service agent wrestling would-be assassins to the ground. He could work nights on the White House detail while holding down a day job as Supreme Court Justice.

•And now Don King. The multitalented Emperor of Babble-On would be dynamite at a number of governmental posts. Take White House Press Secretary, for instance. If you wanted someone to spin a story your way, you could do a lot worse than giving the job to King, who's already talked himself out of a list of transgressions so ugly they make perjury and obstruction of justice look like overdue parking meters.

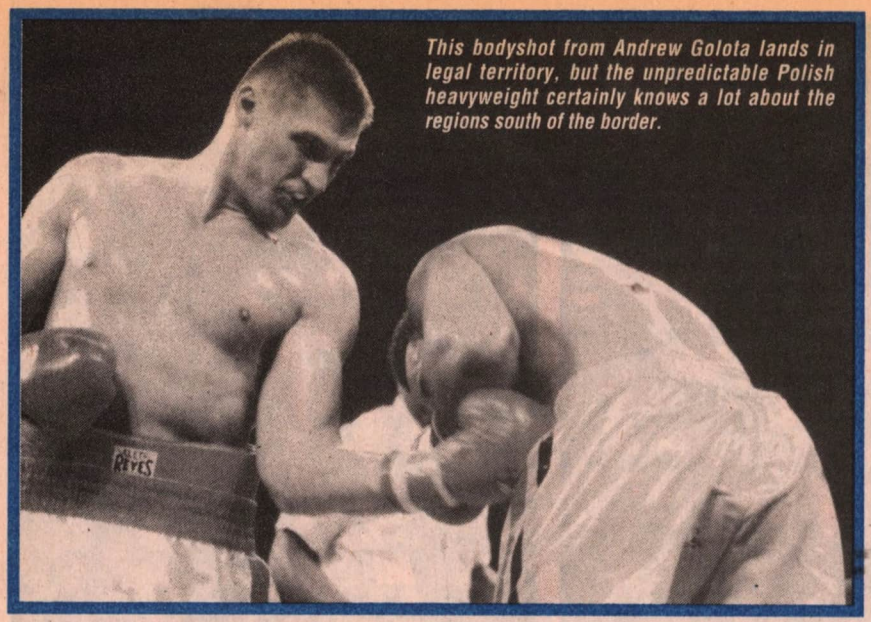
Or, elect Don to the House of Representatives, and he'd own the joint inside of three days. By the way, you know that C-Span coverage of Congress that the cable companies are just giving away? Forget about it. King would option all of that for pay-per-view.

But if you really want to have fun, make the electric-headed one Secretary of the Treasury. Then try checking the books 10 minutes later. They would look like Honduras after Hurricane Mitch went through.

Should any Treasury assets remain, expect step-son and manager extraordinaire Carl King to walk off with 33⅓ percent of them in exchange for whatever it is he does. Meanwhile, daughter Debbie King Lee would of course be diligently performing her difficult and highly compensated duties as president of the Treasury Department Fan Club.

•WBC President Jose Sulaiman: This cheerful executive who runs a shadowy gang of like-minded entrepreneurs (whose books are offshore and thus safe from serious audit) was born to direct the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. No one is better at squeezing money out of whatever moves and then explaining why it's all for some higher purpose.

Speaking of King and Sulaiman, remember when journeyman Buster Douglas refused to follow their script and kayoed their money tree Mike Tyson in Tokyo? The King-Sulaiman combo immediately reviewed an earlier knockdown scored by Tyson, called upon their advanced understanding of mathematics,



This bodyshot from Andrew Golota lands in legal territory, but the unpredictable Polish heavyweight certainly knows a lot about the regions south of the border.

As he's done so well for himself financially, how about getting Oscar De La Hoya to help the U.S. hammer out a new free-trade treaty with Japan?

and concluded that eight actually equaled 10. This made Iron Mike, according to their astute calculations, the winner after all. See, when it comes to counting, Sulaiman and King weave a numerical tapestry that's worthy of the most creative mathematicians at MIT or Harvard. Given this talent, if their other government jobs fall through, they could always run the Census Bureau.

•Should we ever appoint an Ambassador to Extra-Terrestrial Life Forms, I nominate Clown Prince Jorge Paez. He speaks their language.

•Riddick Bowe: Marine Corps Commandant.

•Andrew Golota. Grab this Polish national for our State Department. There's nothing he doesn't know about territories below the Equator.

•Everyone knows that the primary function of the Federal Reserve Board Chairman is to speak gibberish so no one understands what he's saying. That way, he can't possibly shake up world financial markets with an off-hand remark. With his knack for tying the language in knots, the confusing Alan Greenspan has been one of the best Fed Chairmen ever. Entire battalions of economists can't crack the code of his statements. When Greenspan retires, I can't think of a more apt successor than WBC/WBA light heavyweight champ Roy Jones when he gets excited.

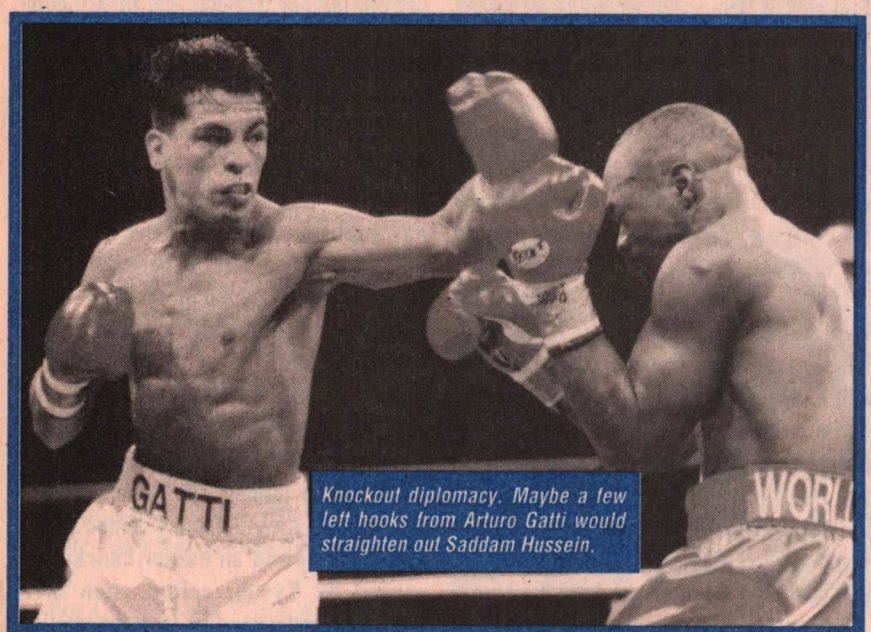
•The Ambassador to the United Nations is charged with keeping the peace and avoiding warfare by negotiating our way out of problems. For this post, we see a two-way tie between middleweight Hector "Macho" Camacho and heavyweight Henry Akinwande, two fighters who are unsurpassed at avoiding a fight at all costs, especially when they are in the ring.

•The United States, which separates church from state in the Constitution, has few government jobs for men of the cloth. But the armed forces do operate a Chaplains Corps in which many clergy have served honorably. To direct this godly enterprise, we nominate British heavyweight Frank Bruno. Bruno, a man of boundless faith, must have crossed himself 88 times while taking what he appeared to believe would be a dead man's walk into the ring with Mike Tyson.

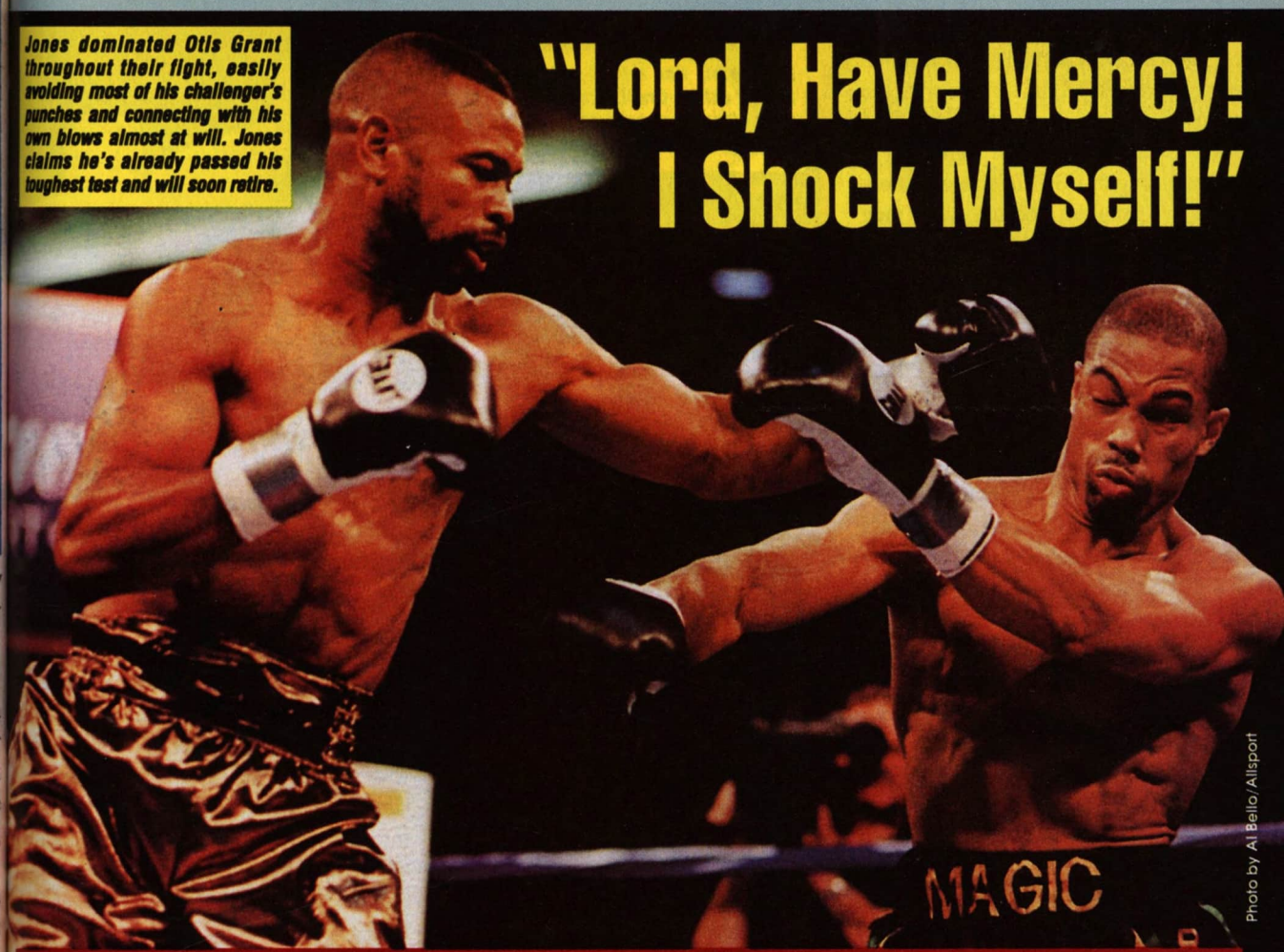
•White House Representative to Iraq. The man to fill this delicate diplomatic mission would be charged with explaining our arms inspection policy to the Baghdad regime. Give this one to Arturo Gatti. The Canadian tough guy would have Saddam Hussein singing "The Star-Spangled Banner" after just one private meeting.

•To the other champions around his weight class, IBF flyweight champ Mark "Too Sharp" Johnson is like a guy sitting in a subway cradling an executioner's sword. It's funny how the other passengers will look everywhere but his direction. In fact, particularly when IBF junior ban-

(Continued on page 60)



Knockout diplomacy. Maybe a few left hooks from Arturo Gatti would straighten out Saddam Hussein.



Jones dominated Otis Grant throughout their fight, easily avoiding most of his challenger's punches and connecting with his own blows almost at will. Jones claims he's already passed his toughest test and will soon retire.

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

"Lord, Have Mercy! I Shock Myself!"

ROY JONES DEFINES HIS GREATNESS

By Ron Borges

Like all great artists, Roy Jones sees his world differently.

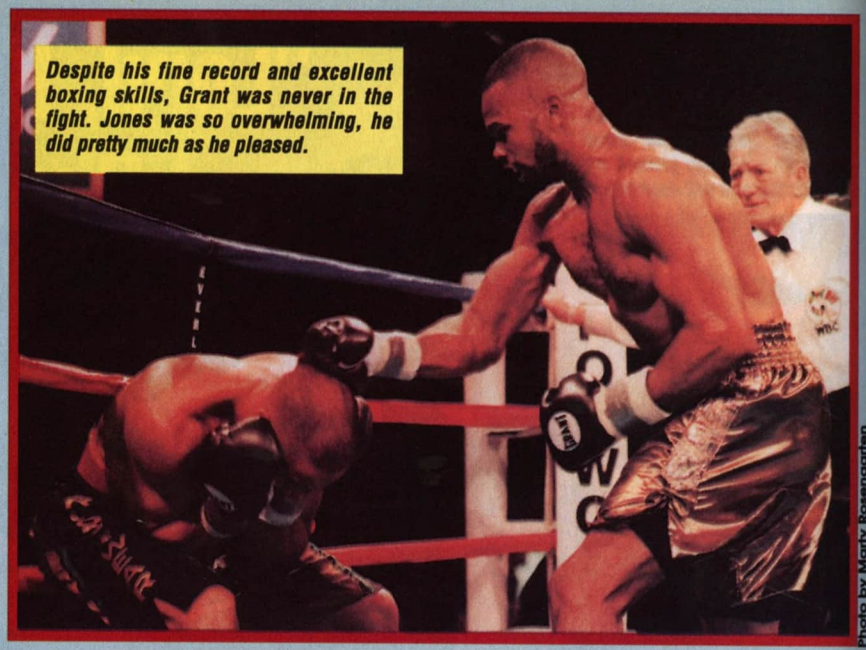
The consensus of opinion throughout boxing is that Jones has to this day been denied his greatness because he has never been faced with an opponent so fearsome he could push Jones to the brink of destruction before the three-time world champion finally finds a way to stare down the icy glare of defeat. Such moments have long been what has defined the greatest of boxing champions. That is why Ray Robinson needed Randy Turpin and Jake LaMotta and Carmen Basilio and Gene Fullmer. Why Ray Leonard needed Thomas Hearns and Roberto Duran, and why Marvin Hagler did as well. Why Duran needed Ken Buchanan and Esteban De Jesus. Why Ali needed Frazier. Why Battling Nelson needed Joe Gans and vice versa. Why Henry Armstrong needed Barney Ross and Fritzie Zivic. Why Tony Zale needed Rocky Graziano.

The greatest icons in boxing all have had to face fierce foils at some point in their careers, yet at nearly 30, Jones has gone unchallenged while winning world titles at 160, 168, and 175 pounds and building a 38-1 (32) record, marred only by an odd loss to Montell Griffin.

Griffin defeated Jones apparently the only way one can at the moment—while lying unconscious on the canvas. In the midst of a tougher than expected night, Jones was finally beginning to get to Griffin when his challenger chose to take a break, dropping to one knee in what Jones

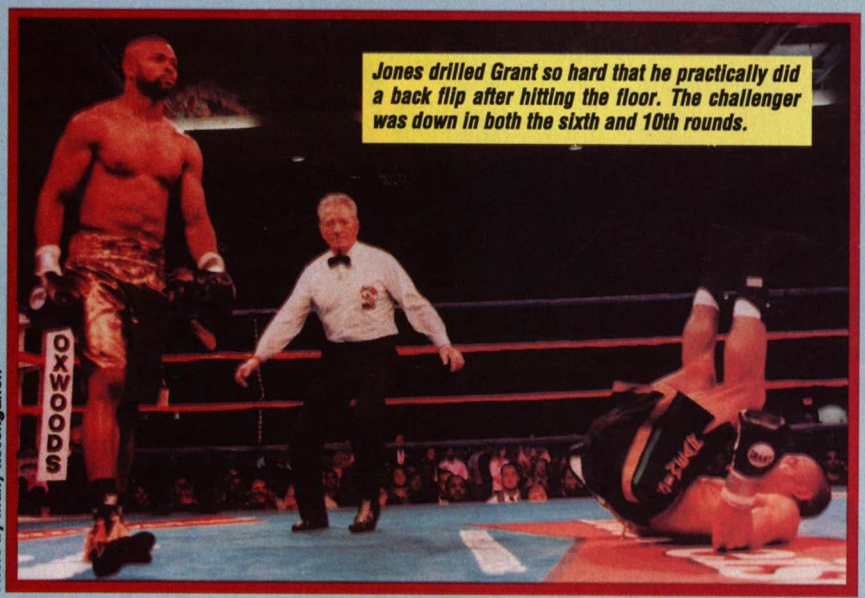
now calls "surrender." Unfulfilled by this less than artful recess in the action, an angry Jones nailed Griffin twice while he was on one knee, leaving him pinned to the floor as the new WBC light heavyweight champion. Griffin's reign barely lasted two minutes, because when they fought their rematch, Jones destroyed him in the first round to end any debate that might have existed about who ruled the 175-pound weight class.

That kind of dominance continued when Jones made his most recent title defense at the Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut against Canadian Otis Grant, who normally fights as a middleweight. Grant is a sound practitioner, but he is a sketch artist while Jones is Picasso, an unorthodox genius who paints his canvases with his opponents' blood.



Despite his fine record and excellent boxing skills, Grant was never in the fight. Jones was so overwhelming, he did pretty much as he pleased.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten



Jones drilled Grant so hard that he practically did a back flip after hitting the floor. The challenger was down in both the sixth and 10th rounds.

Photo by Marty Rosengarten

For 10 rounds, Grant tried to find a way to do something with Jones, but the only thing he could come up with was to take seemingly endless shots to the face or under the rib cage, and try to press on. This led to two knockdowns and a nasty welt under his left eye that began to puff up like a water balloon early in the fight. Both knockdowns came with such lightning speed that Grant's feet rolled up over his head after he hit the floor. In both cases, he got up, but the second time he was driven to the floor, Grant's long-time trainer threw in the towel. These days, however, the towel no longer signifies surrender, so referee Arthur Mercante Sr. kicked it out.

But Russ Anber, who has trained Grant since he was 13, would not be dissuaded. Enough was enough. His opinion was that the WBA and WBC titles that Jones holds were not worth the damage his fighter was taking to try and win them, so he climbed into the ring, and the fight ended with Grant on his stool and Jones climbing up the turnbuckle with a fist raised over his head.

Those have become familiar poses both for Jones and for the men who have tried to dethrone him, and to many that has somehow counted against Jones. While some argue he is the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world, others argue it is Oscar De La Hoya. Once Ricardo Lopez was part of the debate, as was Pernell

Grant often found himself covering up helplessly along the ropes, and Jones kept the pressure on, battering Grant with bodyshots when his head wasn't available.

Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Whitaker. Now young lightweight champion Shane Mosley has also entered the discussion, despite Jones' overwhelming dominance in three weight classes.

All are there, quite frankly, only because Jones has so overwhelmed most of his opponents as to make them suspect, and thus his greatness suspect. That is true with nearly everyone except those who have actually traded punches with him.

"I don't think he needed to put on a Rocky Balboa show," Anber said of Grant. "Roy proved without a shadow of a doubt he is the best pound-for-pound fighter on the planet Earth today. I didn't need to have my man flattened to figure that out."

Grant, 31-2-1 (17), had no quarrel with that. He willingly conceded Jones' greatness both before and after the fight, using his own performance against him as a measuring stick. Grant landed a total of 66 punches, an average of only 6.6 a round, and only *one* of the 137 jabs he threw in Jones' general direction.

"I couldn't reach him with my jab," Grant said. "It fell short. I only caught him a couple of times. It was a helpless feeling. But credit Roy; the stuff we thought would work with him didn't."

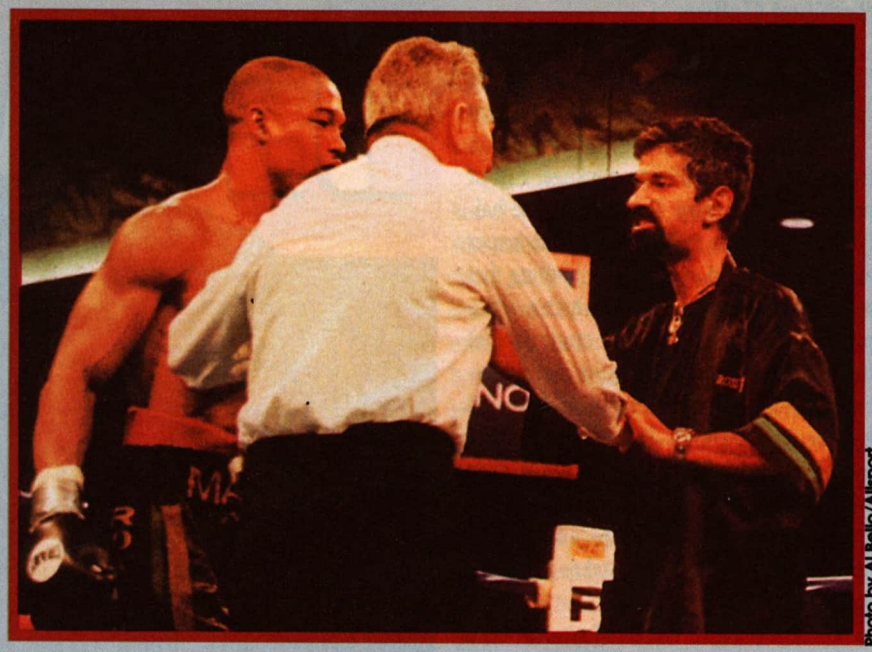


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

Grant's manager-trainer Russ Anber enters the ring and tells referee Arthur Mercante that his man has had enough. Seconds earlier, the ref had ignored Anber when he threw a white towel into the ring.

That's because while Grant was landing only 27 percent of his 248 punches, Jones was peppering him with 44 percent of the 392 he threw. From start to finish, Jones did whatever he wanted, as he usually has, yet somehow it seems to him that the boxing world has penalized him for his near perfection. Nearly all his fights end when Jones decides they will, taking his time in some circumstances and ridding himself of his opponent quickly in others. Yet Jones does not believe his genius is being denied him because of this apparent lack of an Olympian peak to climb, but rather because the mere mortals watching him do not realize what they are seeing when true greatness is in front of them.

Photo by Marty Rosenquist

Jones, one of only three fighters to currently hold more than one world title (heavyweight Evander Holyfield and strawweight Ricardo Lopez are the other two) proudly displays the WBA and WBC light heavyweight championship belts.

"I had tough opponents, too, but I blew them out," Jones said. "James Toney was killing everybody. Before we fought, there were plenty of people who said he would win, but I blew Toney away. The next time you saw him, he weighed 230 pounds. They said the same thing when I fought Bernard Hopkins. I beat him so bad, he won't move up [in weight from middleweight to super middleweight to challenge Jones again at 168 pounds]. He won't fight me again, even though he's always saying he wants a rematch. How bad do he want Roy Jones?

"I had the same kind of challenges Ray Robinson and Sugar Ray Leonard had. They just didn't blow them away. They weren't that much better than those guys. I was. They passed their tests. I blew my tests away.

"Why would I *want* to fight a great battle? People who want to see that aren't doing the fighting. Do I need that to get my due? For what? I've had my tests, but I got rid of mine once and for all. I didn't leave the job half done, like other guys, so they had to fight again. Look at Virgil Hill. He was one of the greatest light heavyweight champions. Never been stopped. You saw what happened when we fought. That's why I don't live to satisfy other people."

What happened was Hill was sent writhing to the canvas from the only bodyshot Jones threw, his face a contorted

(Continued on page 55)

DE LA HOYA vs. QUARTEY

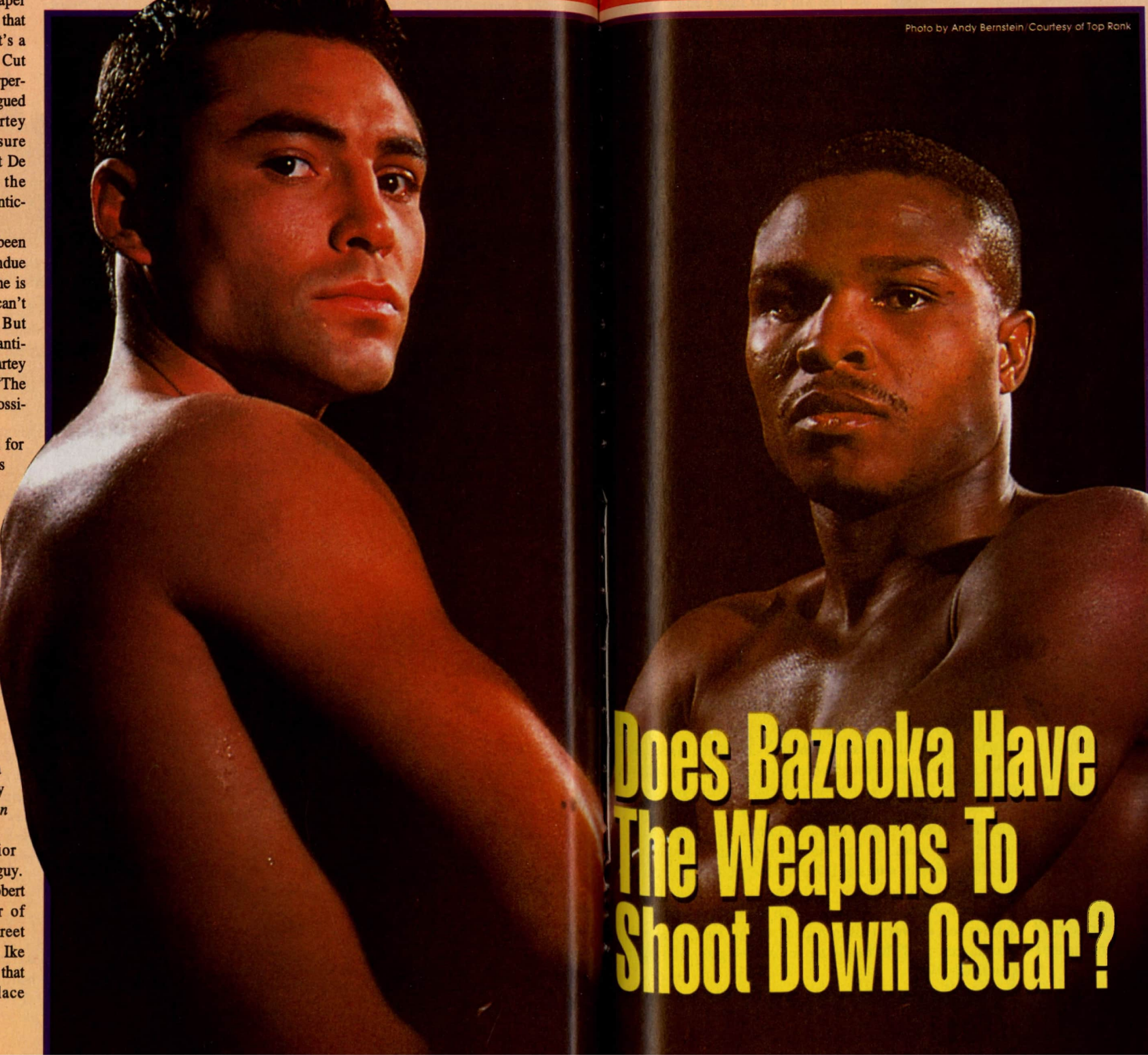


Photo by Andy Bernstein/Courtesy of Top Rank

Does Bazooka Have The Weapons To Shoot Down Oscar?

By Nigel Collins

Until the opening bell, a superfight is like a brightly wrapped present with a bow on top. It sits there in front of you, a tantalizing package, full of promise and mystery. But once all the ballyhoo and tough talk are over, the paper and ribbon ripped away, the only thing that really matters, regardless of whether it's a present or a prize fight, is content. Cut through all the superficial glitz and hyperbole, and the reason we're all so intrigued by the Oscar De La Hoya-Ike Quartey match is very simple—we're not sure who's going to win. And the fact that De La Hoya and Quartey are among the sport's finest practitioners makes the anticipation even sweeter.

Until this fight, De La Hoya has been frequently perceived as having an undue advantage over his opponents: This one is too old; that one too small; the other can't punch. You've heard it all before. But even the most obstinate among the anti-Oscar brigade have to admit that Quartey presents a formidable challenge to "The Golden Boy's" unblemished record, possibly his most severe to date.

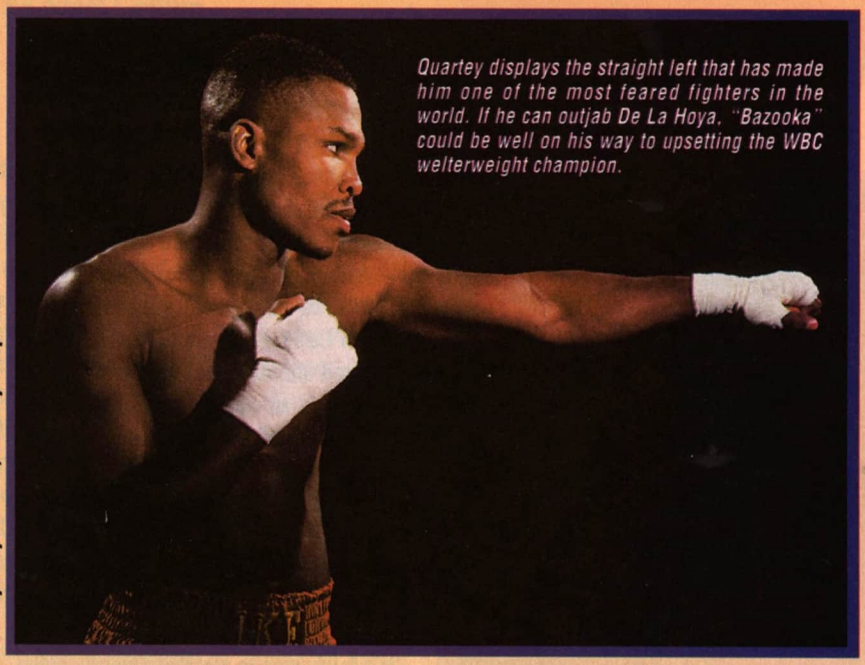
Quartey is valued almost as much for what he isn't as for what he is. He's *not* a recycled legend living off past glories like previous De La Hoya victims Julio Cesar Chavez and Hector Camacho. And he's *not* a naturally smaller man moving up in weight in order to garner a big payday like Genaro Hernandez. Quartey is only 29 years old, has been in relatively few punishing fights, and has competed at 147 pounds since 1993, which, ironically, might ultimately work against him. (More about that later.) Quartey is unbeaten in 35 professional bouts (with 29 knockouts), 7-0-1 in world titles fights, and has a highly respectable number of quality victims on his resume *(see sidebar on page 41)*.

The normally stone-faced warrior from Ghana is also a genuine tough guy. He's one of 27 children fathered by Robert Quartey, a renowned practitioner of *asafoatswere*, an ancient form of street combat indigenous to his homeland. Ike grew up in Bukom, a district in Accra that rivals any New World ghetto, a place where knowing how to fight was a necessity of daily survival. When asked about the De La Hoya fight at a New York City press conference, Quartey's reply was brutally direct: "I will break his bones."

Of course, there are a substantial number of folks out there who want the man who calls himself "Bazooka" to do exactly that. Although the screaming, wiggling multitude of adolescent girls who have made De La Hoya a teen idol will be brokenhearted should Quartey live up to his boast, there's an equally vociferous, albeit smaller, group of fans who loathe him for many of the same reasons he makes the girls swoon. But can Quartey do it? Can he expose The Golden Boy as a product of mass marketing and creative matchmaking, or will he become just another stop along De La Hoya's fast-track to Canastota?

It's fairly safe to say that Quartey is the hardest puncher De La Hoya has faced as a pro. His left jab lands with such impact, it can be favorably compared to its owner's rocket-launching nickname. The punch is not merely employed to probe for openings, set up other punches, or score points. It is a destructive blow that disfigures faces as it smacks home with neck-wrenching power, and is more than sufficient to win many fights without assistance from the rest of Quartey's intimidating arsenal.

When he's in the groove, De La Hoya's jab is also a weapon to be reckoned with that makes all his other punches much more effective. In the rematch with Chavez, however, De La Hoya had difficulty connecting with the straight left, mainly because he was throwing it from too far away from the target. That's never been a problem with Quartey, who commits himself every time he throws the jab, stepping in behind it with maximum leverage and body weight. True, the 5'11" De La Hoya has a four-inch height advantage, but Quartey's 71-inch reach is only one inch shorter than De La Hoya's, and besides, timing is just as important, maybe more so, as height and reach when it comes to landing a punch. If Quartey can outjab De La Hoya, he'll be more than halfway home to becoming the



Quartey displays the straight left that has made him one of the most feared fighters in the world. If he can outjab De La Hoya, "Bazooka" could be well on his way to upsetting the WBC welterweight champion.

Photo by Andy Bernstein/Courtesy of Top rank

new WBC welterweight champion.

It's reasonable to assume that Quartey will fight his usual fight: relentless pressure, plenty of jabs, and a blizzard of combinations when he has his man cornered. On the other hand, how De La Hoya will go about the night's business is far from certain. Part of that has to do with the seemingly endless parade of trainers playing tag in his corner (longtime coach Robert Alcazar and vet Gil Clancy will be there again for the Quartey fight), but a lot also depends on what kind of mood the fighter is in. Some members of Team De La Hoya were aghast at the way he stood toe-to-toe with Chavez and traded punches the last time out. Afterward, he assured everybody that he would not fight Quartey the same way, and it's unlikely that an all-out blitz will be his fight plan for Quartey. But it sure would make spectators happy if it turns out to be the sort of fight where De La Hoya has no alternative but to swap shots. And Quartey just might be good enough to make it happen. Still, look for De La Hoya to try to outbox Quartey from the outside, especially in the early rounds, and not without good reason.

In two of his most significant fights, a 12-round decision over Oba Carr and a 12-round draw with Jose Luis Lopez, the African faded noticeably in the late rounds. It's doubtful that Quartey underestimated Carr and Lopez, and failed to train properly. A more likely explanation is that he struggled so hard to make 147 pounds that he was almost completely drained going into the championship rounds. And if you buy this theory, staying out of dangerous

OSCAR'S GREATEST HITS

•John-John Molina, W 12 (February 18, 1995): Molina was riding a 15-fight winning streak and in his second reign as IBF junior lightweight champion when he moved up five pounds to fight De La Hoya. The tough and savvy Puerto Rican did his best to fluster the relatively inexperienced "Golden Boy" with roughhouse tactics. But De La Hoya dropped him in the first, hung tough during some difficult middle rounds, and rallied late to win a unanimous decision by scores of 117-110 and 116-111 (twice).

•Rafael Ruelas, KO 2 (May 6, 1995): IBF lightweight champion Ruelas was in his prime and the owner of a 43-1 (34) record when he met with De La Hoya. A lot of people thought he'd expose his baby-faced rival as a built-up fraud, but 1:43 into the second round, referee Richard Steele had to step in to rescue Ruelas, who had already been knocked down twice in the round. A great performance overshadowed by the tragic death of Jimmy Garcia, who died as a result of injuries suffered in his undercard bout with Rafael's brother, Gabriel.

•Genaro Hernandez, KO 6 (September 9, 1995): True, the then-undefeated Hernandez, 32-0-1 (16), was a natural 130-pounder fighting at 135, but that didn't seem to matter in the early going, when his boxing skills had De La Hoya off-balance and missing. At any rate, when De La Hoya connected with a nose-shattering left uppercut in the sixth, "Chicanito" ran up the white flag at the end of the round.

Molina was De La Hoya's first big test

•Miguel Angel Gonzalez, W 12 (January 18, 1997): Skeptics forget that Gonzalez, then 41-0 (31), had already outgrown the 135-pound class, given up the WBC lightweight title, and had three fights as a junior welter when he challenged De La Hoya for the WBC super lightweight belt. He was good enough to last the distance and give The Golden Boy a knot on his cheek, but not good enough to win the decision, which went to the defending champ by scores of 117-109, 117-111, and 117-110.

•Julio Cesar Chavez, KO 8 (September 18, 1998): There was no he-was-cut-coming-in excuse the second time around. De La Hoya beat Chavez at his own game, trading bombs until the Mexican icon said "No Mas" at the end of the eighth, his bottom lip in shreds.

IKE'S GREATEST HITS

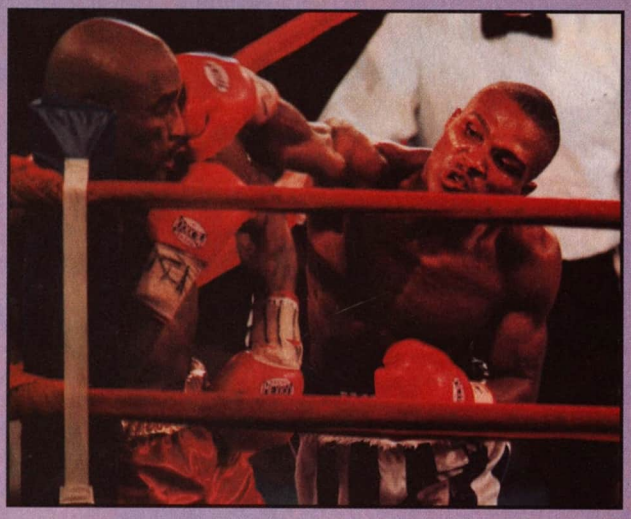
•**Kelcie Banks, KO 7 (November 2, 1991):** In his first fight in the United States, the man from Ghana took on former amateur standout Banks, who was 19-2-1 (11) at the time and still considered a quality prospect. Quartey put an end to that kind of speculation by dishing out a one-sided pasting.

•**Crisanto Espana, KO 11 (June 4, 1994):** Quartey didn't win the WBA welterweight title by knocking off a chump. The hard-hitting, Ireland-based Venezuelan had brutalized Meldrick Taylor to take the belt in October '92 and was 30-0 (25) with two successful defenses under his belt when Quartey stopped him in an exciting punchout.

•**Vince Phillips, KO 3 (April 12, 1996):** This was "Bazooka" at his best. He engaged the talented and sharp-hitting Phillips in a series of mid-ring exchanges, and damn near tore his head off. An especially impressive performance in light of Phillips' future success.

•**Oba Carr, W 12 (October 4, 1996):** Even though there were some people who thought Carr edged it, Quartey did enough to retain the WBA 147-pound belt by scores of 117-107, 116-109, and 112-112. This was a close, competitive fight between two top-notch welters, and although Quartey failed to add another kayo to his ledger, he proved he could beat one of the best-schooled men in the division.

•**Jose Luis Lopez, D 12 (October 17, 1997):** This, like the Carr bout, is a fight that critics point to when expounding on Quartey's alleged shortcomings. But over the first two-thirds of the fight, the defending champ's jab beat such at steady tattoo on the Mexican slugger's face that Quartey still emerged with the title—by scores of 116-112, 115-115, and 113-113—despite a late fade and an 11th-round knockdown. Hey, if you fight top guys, and Lopez is certainly a top guy, you're going to be in competitive fights. Let's give Quartey the credit he deserves for having the guts to tangle with quality contenders.

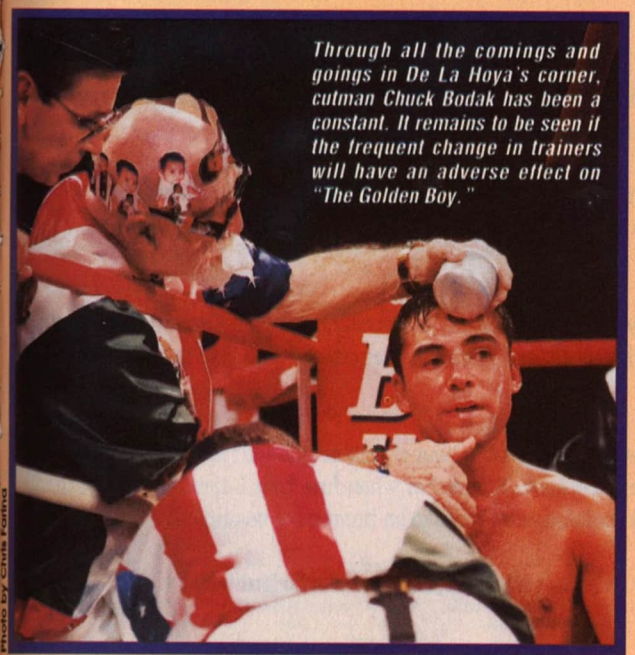


Quartey traps Carr in a corner

exchanges while Quartey is fresh makes a lot of sense, and the best time for De La Hoya to go after him would be down the stretch.

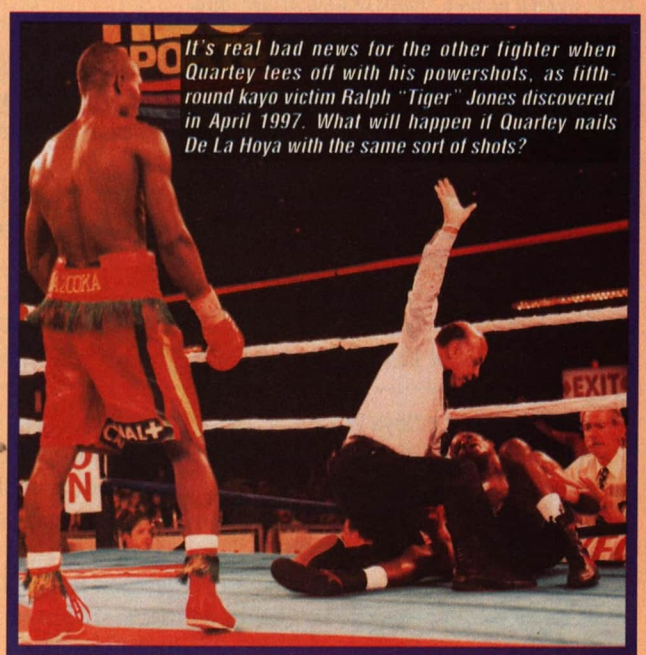
As in any fight, there are a number of intangibles involved. One unknown quantity that could certainly affect the outcome is the cut De La Hoya suffered in training, which forced the fight to be postponed from November 21, 1998, until February 13, 1999. If Quartey can reopen the laceration, his mission will be made that much easier.

So far, we've concentrated mainly on factors that may prove to be in Quartey's favor. But what about De La Hoya? After all, Las Vegas oddsmaker Herb Lambeck has installed him as an early 3-1 favorite. The main reason Lambeck and a lot of other people believe De La Hoya will win is because he always has in the past. That might sound a bit simplistic, but whether



Through all the comings and goings in De La Hoya's corner, cutman Chuck Bodak has been a constant. It remains to be seen if the frequent change in trainers will have an adverse effect on "The Golden Boy."

Photo by Chris Farina



It's real bad news for the other fighter when Quartey tees off with his powershots, as fifth-round kayo victim Ralph "Tiger" Jones discovered in April 1997. What will happen if Quartey nails De La Hoya with the same sort of shots?

Photo by Chris Farina

In his last outing before taking on Quartey, De La Hoya tallied his second TKO victory over Julio Cesar Chavez. Much to his corner's chagrin, The Golden Boy went toe-to-toe with the aging Mexican legend.

his detractors like to admit it or not, The Golden Boy has passed every test presented to him from the day he won an Olympic gold medal in Barcelona, right up to his most recent fight, when he forced the once-proud Chavez to quit on his stool. And he's not doing it with smoke and mirrors.

The 26-year-old De La Hoya, 29-0 (24), is a boxing thoroughbred, the sort of fighter who only comes along once in a generation—if that. His athletic grace, dazzling hand speed, and knockout punch are augmented by a genuine passion for his art and an overwhelming desire to succeed. And don't let that pretty face fool you. There's an icy edge lurking beneath that polite, politically correct surface, an edge that allows him to turn into a stone killer once the bell rings. Those who think he's a pampered brat haven't been paying attention.

One thing that's definitely in De La Hoya's favor is that he's been active. Quartey's last fight, the draw with Lopez,

(Continued on page 56)

DE LA HOYA vs. QUARTEY: STAFF PICKS

•Nigel Collins: De La Hoya KO 10

"De La Hoya can punch just as hard as Quartey, if not harder, and has a better chin. He can also make 147 pounds easier than Quartey, which will make him the stronger man down the stretch."

•Stu Saks: Quartey KO 10

"My gut feeling tells me that although the critics have been harsh in their criticism, the truth is Oscar has never faced a primed opponent in his weight class who matches his skills and will to win. As tempted as I'd be to take the 3-1 odds, though, I'm going to avoid talking to Jack Welsh until after the fight."

•Eric Raskin: De La Hoya W 12

"I wouldn't go so far as to call Quartey one-dimensional, but he's nowhere as complete a fighter as De La Hoya offensively or defensively. That awesome jab is the only area where he really has the advantage. But De La Hoya's not knocking quality guys out at welter like he used to at lightweight, so I look for him to win comfortably over the distance."

•Joseph Santoliquito: De La Hoya KO 8

"I think De La Hoya wants to prove emphatically that he's the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world. This is his chance. We could see 'The Golden Boy' at an even higher intensity level than we saw against Julio Cesar Chavez. Quartey doesn't have the chin to withstand De La Hoya's power."

•William Dettloff: Quartey W 12

"Going off Quartey's last fight, in which he was nearly stopped by Jose Luis Lopez, it's tempting to go with Oscar. But I thought Ike won about nine of 12 rounds against Lopez. This is a very hard pick, but I see Quartey's strength and skills being a bit too much for De La Hoya."

•Jeff Ryan: De La Hoya W 12

"How will Quartey deal with all the hype, pressure, and distractions that surround a bout of this magnitude? De La Hoya gets the nod because he's been through this before and he possesses a punishing left hook. Remember when Jose Luis Lopez' hook deposited Quartey on the floor? Look for The Golden Boy to score a couple of knockdowns en route to an impressive unanimous decision."

•Jack Welsh: De La Hoya KO 10

"Without a doubt, this is going to be Oscar's toughest fight so far. He can't afford another war like he had with J.C. Chavez, but he has the speed and power to wear Quartey down in the late rounds."

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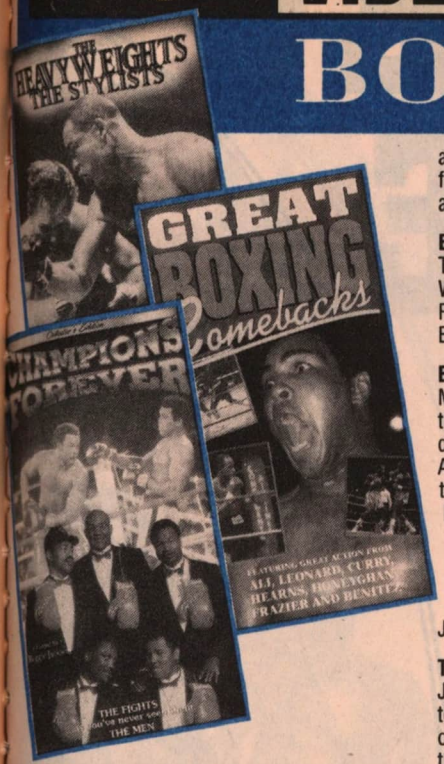

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THE COLEY WALLACE STORY

He Looked Like Louis ... Until The Bell Rang

By Pete Ehrmann

On the day the movie *The Joe Louis Story* premiered in New York City, the man himself and a companion were standing outside the Holiday Theater on 47th and Broadway when a woman enthusiastically approached them.

"Mr. Louis, you're my hero," she gushed. "I'm so glad to meet you. You're the greatest man in the world and I've been your biggest fan ... "

This went on for a while, and finally the man to whom she had been addressing her encomiums interrupted. "Ma'am, this is Joe Louis," said Coley Wallace, pointing toward the man standing right next to him who was trying hard not to laugh too much.

"But he's older!" protested the woman.

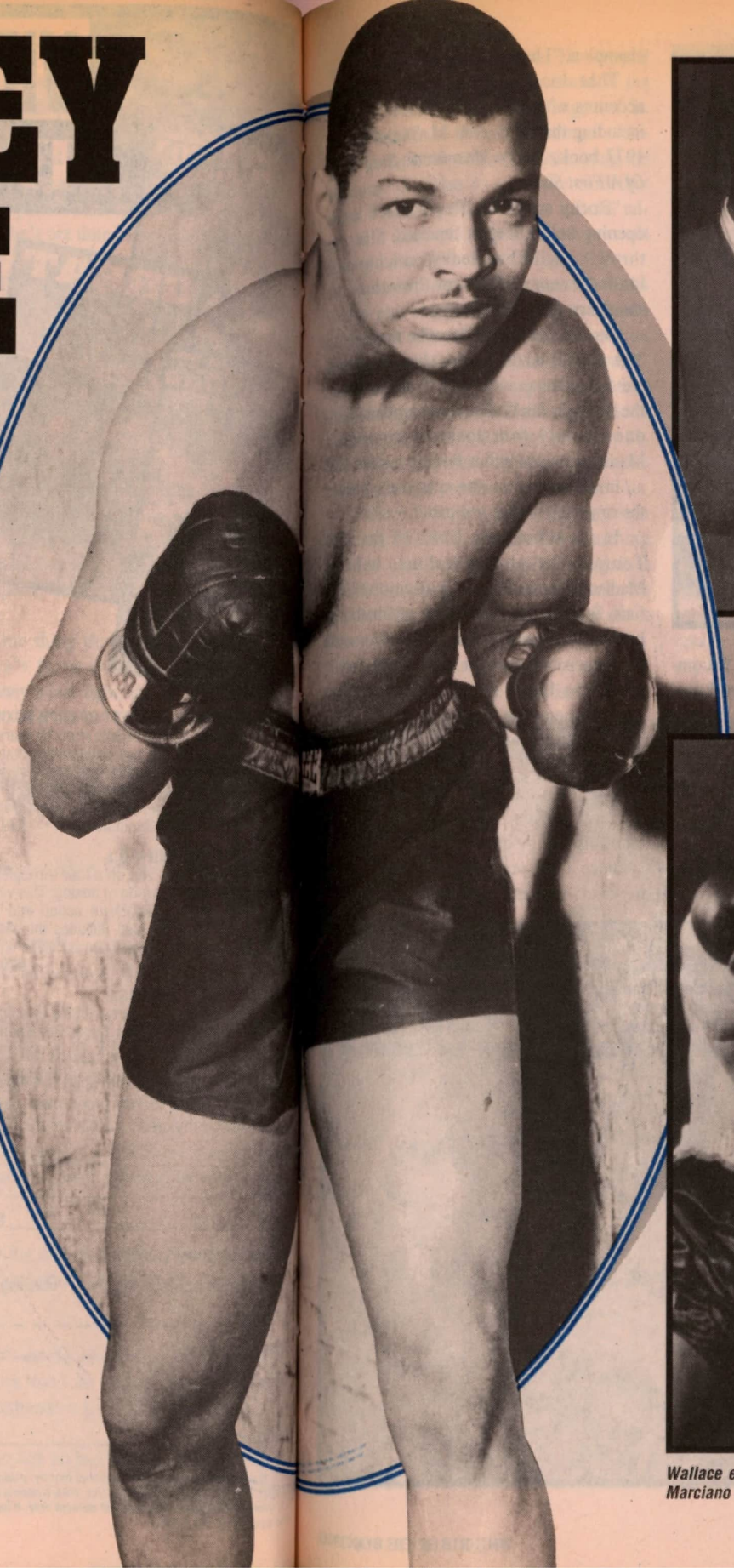
"Joe got a big kick out of that," recalled Wallace, now 71.

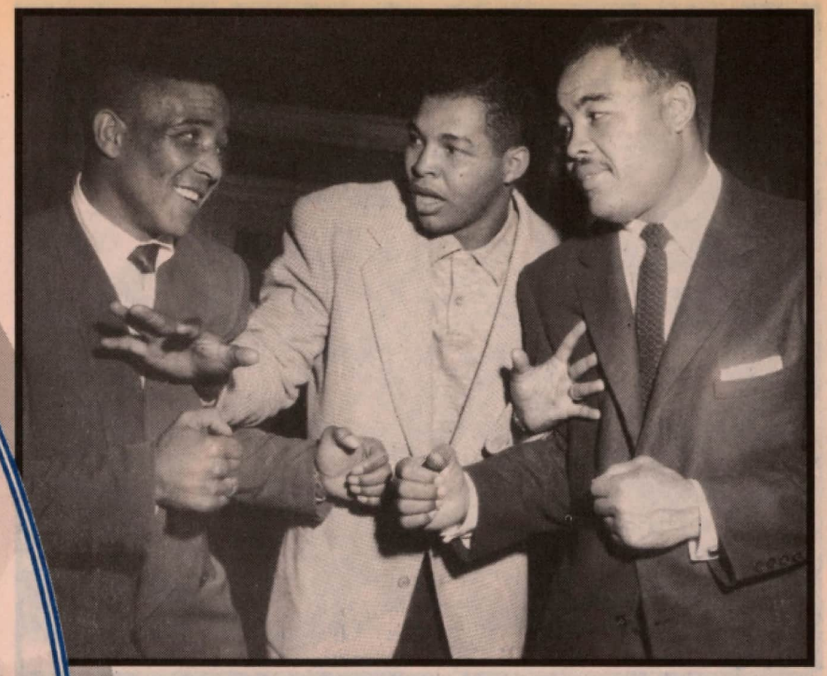
There was only one "Brown Bomber," of course, but a lot of people had the same reaction as that woman to the 6'2", 200-pound Wallace, who not only bore a striking physical resemblance to a young Louis—and hence was picked to star in the 1953 film biography about the former heavyweight champion—but was also hailed as Joe's fistic reincarnation a half-century ago.

Even before he threw his first punch for pay, "some of the enthusiastic have already labeled Wallace the 'new Joe Louis,'" reported THE RING in 1948. Unfortunately, the closest Wallace came to walking in the footsteps of the man who reigned as undisputed champion from 1937-'49 was playing Louis on the screen. But that in itself would've seemed a preposterous fantasy for the youngster who had to leave Jacksonville, Florida, at age 13, because his family feared he might be lynched after an older white woman at the hotel where Wallace worked tried to seduce him.

"A black man caught with a white woman in a hotel in the South was a serious thing in those days," said Wallace, who lives in New York City.

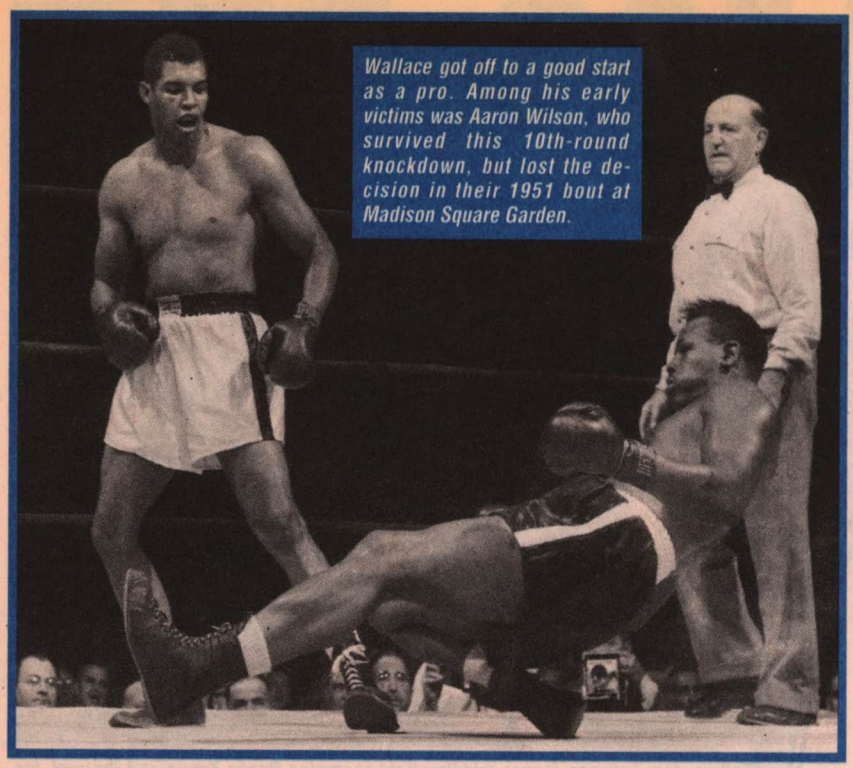
He was sent to live with his father in Richmond, Virginia. The older Wallace





Wallace gets between former middleweight champion Randy Turpin and the real Joe Louis in a publicity shot for The Joe Louis Story, *which was released to generally favorable reviews in 1953. Unfortunately, it was a flop at the box office.*

Wallace earned a reputation in the amateurs by outpointing future heavyweight champion Rocky Marciano in the Golden Gloves. They never fought in the professional ranks.



Wallace got off to a good start as a pro. Among his early victims was Aaron Wilson, who survived this 10th-round knockdown, but lost the decision in their 1951 bout at Madison Square Garden.

was a red cap with the railroad, and after he went through high school, Coley hired on as a baggage handler. "I was unloading cars on the train one day, and this fellow saw me," he recalled. Appraising the youngster's size and strength, the man had a question for Wallace: "Why don't you be a prize fighter?"

Wallace took up the suggestion when he entered the Army, and won the heavyweight championship at Fort Dix, New Jersey. Then it was on to New York, where, after just a few more bouts, he became "the most talked-about amateur boxer since Joe Louis was a simon-pure."

That's what *The New York Times* said in reporting Wallace's victory in the 1948 New York Golden Gloves tournament. "Something of a four-alarm riot" is what THE RING called him for the way he dispatched his two opponents in a total of just over three minutes to win the heavyweight championship and advance to competition against winners of the Northeast regional tournaments. It was there that Wallace accomplished something not even the real Louis could do by beating a slugger named Rocky Marciano, who had scored three knockouts in the Lowell, Massachusetts, Golden Gloves to wind up in the ring opposite Wallace at the Ridgewood Grove Arena in Brooklyn in early-March.

"It was an easy fight," recalled Wallace of his meeting with the future heavyweight champion. "I had him down twice."

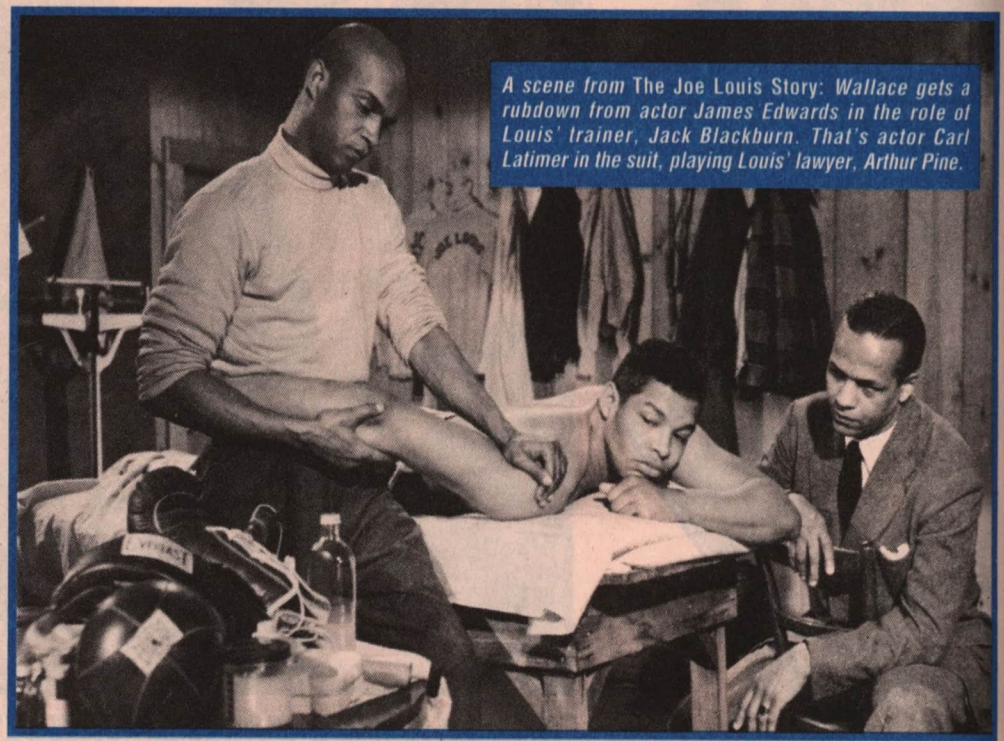
That doesn't quite jibe with other accounts of the Wallace-Marciano bout, including that of Everett M. Skehan in his 1977 book, *Rocky Marciano: Biography Of A First Son.*

"Rocky swarmed after Wallace at the opening bell," Skehan reported. "He was throwing wild but heavy punches that landed everywhere—on the arms, the shoulders, the top of the head."

Skehan went on to describe the fight as "the classic boxer versus slugger contest the fight fans crave," and wrote that after the decision for Wallace was announced—one of only four losses incurred by Marciano in his entire boxing career, and all in the amateurs—the customers littered the ring with bottles and paper.

In the subsequent finals of the 19th Tournament of Champions, held at Madison Square Garden in front of 17,926 fans, Wallace had Bob Baker of Pittsburgh in trouble several times, but had to settle for a decision win over the man he would not be so lucky against later in their careers when there was more at stake.

The Garden was almost sold out when Wallace beat Clarence Henry, yet another future top contender who'd won the Chicago Golden Gloves heavyweight championship, by decision that April. Wallace's big punch would return in the national Amateur Athletic Union tourna-



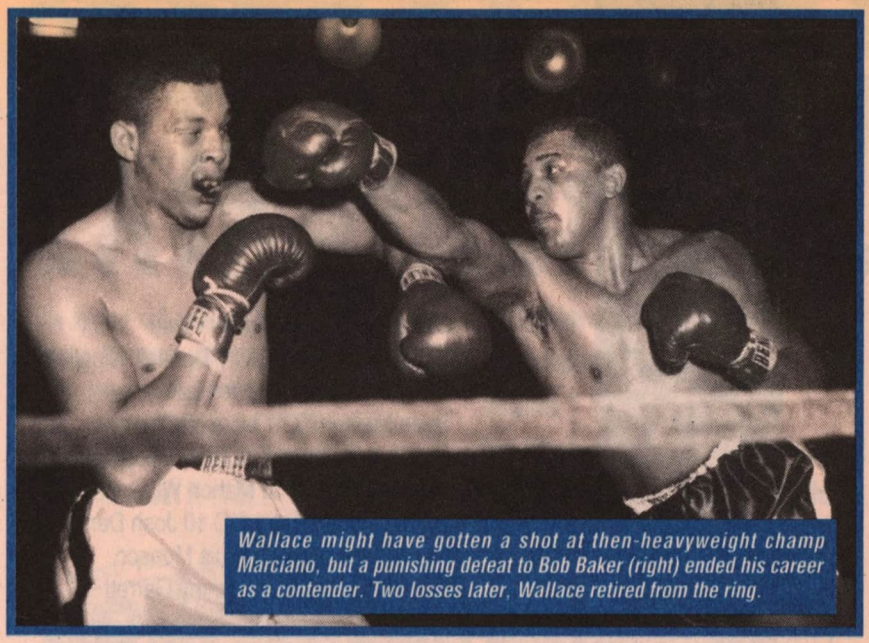
A scene from The Joe Louis Story: *Wallace gets a rubdown from actor James Edwards in the role of Louis' trainer, Jack Blackburn. That's actor Carl Latimer in the suit, playing Louis' lawyer, Arthur Pine.*

ment at the Boston Gardens. He stopped Willie Chapman in two rounds and in the finals faced 240-pound Bill Bangert of St. Louis, who was not only a former collegiate shot-put champion, but also sang the National Anthem to open the card that April 8 evening. But Wallace had the talent that counted, and Bangert was all through after 2:37 of the first round.

As an amateur, Wallace went 17-1. His rookie year as a pro did nothing to dampen talk that a second Brown Bomber was on the rise. Wallace went 9-0 in 1950, knocking out his first eight opponents before decisioning worthwhile Duilio Spagnolo in his first 10-round match on December 11. The Italian had been fighting main events since he turned pro three years earlier.

Wallace was even more impressive on February 16, 1951, when he did something nobody else had accomplished against Detroit knockout artist Vern Mitchell. He put the artist on the canvas. Wallace did it twice en route to giving the 56-8-1 Mitchell his first kayo loss.

There were two Joe Louis imitators on the card at Madison Square Garden on June 15 of that year, and neither one looked so hot. In the main event, the creaky Bomber himself, just two months shy of getting whacked into permanent retirement by Marciano, showed few flashes of his former skills in stopping Lee Savold. And Joe's young mirror image was knocked off for the first time by a cagey, squatty veteran named Elkins Brothers in the semifinal. Brothers had been around since 1947, and had fought such worthies as Pat Comisky and Arturo Godoy. He stopped Wallace at 1:36 of the second round.



Wallace might have gotten a shot at then-heavyweight champ Marciano, but a punishing defeat to Bob Baker (right) ended his career as a contender. Two losses later, Wallace retired from the ring.

A bruised Wallace is comforted by actress Hilda Simms, who played Louis' wife, Marva, in The Joe Louis Story.

"I had family problems at the time, and a log of other things on my mind," said Wallace. "I could have beat him otherwise, and he wouldn't give me a return bout."

There was a return match with Aaron Wilson, who'd also been a top U.S. amateur and had launched his pro career in Sweden in 1946. Wilson had stopped future Marciano challenger Don Cockell twice before returning home and knocking out Brothers in eight rounds. He and Wallace were made on a day's notice at the Garden on November 9, as a substitute for the canceled Roland LaStarza-Dan Bucceroni fight.

Wilson was tough and clever, and would become one of Marciano's most useful sparring partners. He was ahead until Wallace knocked him down in the final round to steal the points win. In the rematch at St. Nicholas Arena two months later, they had to carry Wilson to his corner when the bell ended round two. A Wallace right did it.

Two fights later, the 16-1 Wallace seemed on his way to his biggest victory yet. The opponent was the man who'd

(Continued on page 61)

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS
David Izon KO 4 Darroll Wilson
Wladimir Klitschko KO 1 Donnell Wingfield
Corey Sanders KO 2 Jeff Lally
Brian Nielsen KO 1 Lionel Butler
Iran Barkley KO 1 Tue Bjorn Thomsen
Michael Rush W 10 Marion Wilson
Jorge Luis Gonzalez KO 10 Josh Dempsey
Derrick Banks W 10 Louis Monaco
Keith McKnight KO 2 Jimmy Garrett
Joey Guy W 12 James Spears
Toakipa Tasefa KO 2 Justin Fortune
Kim Weber KO 2 Daniel Dino Salcedo
Gary Bell KO 4 Lorenzo Boyd
Ross Puritty KO 2 Mark Hulstrom
Terry McGroom KO 2 Mike Acklie
Eliecer Castillo W 8 Miguel Otero
Nate Jones W 6 Anthony James Moore

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Fabrice Tiozzo KO 2 Ezequiel Paixao
(Retains WBA Title)
Thomas Hearns KO 1 Jay Snyder
Virgil Hill KO 1 Jimmy Hayes
Sajad Abdullah Aziz D 10 Eliseo Castillo
Terry Dunstan W 8 Peter Oboh
Pietro Aurino W 10 Marco Guidelli

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Roy Jones KO 10 Otis Grant
(Retains WBA/WBC Titles)
Eric Harding W 12 Montell Griffin

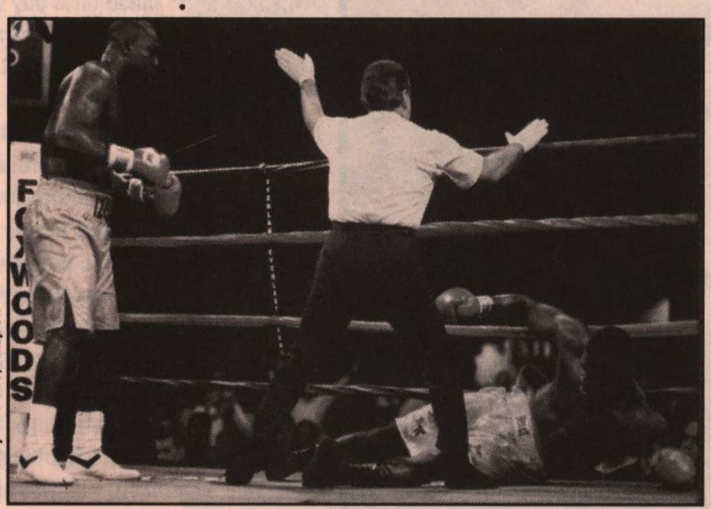


Photo by Al Bello/Allsport

David Izon won a four-round shootout with Darroll Wilson

Hisashi Teraji W 12 Jamie Wallace
Jean-Marc Mormeck W 10 Alain Simon
Jimmy Crawford KO 8 Richie Galvin

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Vinny Pazienza W 10 Arthur Allen
Eric Lucas W 10 Juan Carlos Viloria
Undra White KO 2 Dean Francis
David Starie KO 11 Ali Forbes
Mario Veit W 12 Branco Sobot

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Keith Holmes W 10 Urbano Gurrola
Davey Hilton KO 12 Stephane Ouellet
Brian Barbosa KO 3 Tom Cameron
Nobunao Ohtani W 10 Yoshinori Nishizawa
Hercules Kyvelos W 4 Rodney Tatum

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Oba Carr W 8 Verdell Smith
Roger Mayweather W 10 Patrick Byrd
Pedro Ortega KO 10 Floyd Weaver
Daniel Santos KO 2 Ameth Aranda
Kirino Garcia KO 1 Charles Whitaker
Kevin Lueshing W 12 Nicky Thurbin
Hassan Al W 12 Angel Villegas
Derek Roche KO 10 Del Bryan

WELTERWEIGHTS
Shannan Taylor Tech. Win 6 Suk Hyun Yun
Ahmed Katejew W 12 Santos Cardona
Edgar Ruiz KO 5 Jose Luis Benitez
Dingaan Thobela D 12 Carlos Baldomir
Michele Piccirillo W 12 Alessandro Duran
Julian Holland KO 10 Alberto MaChong
Geoff McCreesh KO 4 Ross Hale

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
Kostya Tszyu KO 5 Diobelys Hurtado
(Wins WBC Interim Title)
Diobelys Hurtado W 10 Manuel Gomez
Ben Tackie W 10 Hicklett Lau
Oktay Urkal W 12 Victor Baranov
Rocky Martinez KO 8 Roberto Nunez
Junichi Ono KO 9 Ryoji Tezuka
Terrance Cauthen W 10 Patrick Thorns
Justin Rowsell KO 3 Haris Pujono
Frederic Tripp KO 7 Nordine Mouchi

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Shane Mosley KO 9 James Leija
(Retains IBF Title)
Steve Johnston KO 6 Demetrio Ceballos
Orlando Canizales KO 3 Tommy Valdez
Steve Quinonez W 12 Sergio Macias
Juan Torres W 10 Santos Rebolledo
Javier Valadez KO 10 Chris Linson

Rick Yoshimura W 10 Norito Kimura
Steve Smith W 10 Anthony Maynard
Djamel Lifa KO 2 Yannick Paget
Bruno Wartelle W 10 Rodolpho Lunsford
Yuji Watanabe KO 1 Arnold Jaspe
Vivian Harris KO 1 Eldon Sneed

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
Derrick Gainer KO 6 Luis Leija
Tom Johnson KO 8 Jose Montes
Jorge Paez KO 2 Juan Polo-Perez
Jose Badillo W 10 Antonio Ramirez
Diego Corrales KO 5 Hector Arroyo

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Luisito Espinosa KO 2 Kennedy McKinney
(Retains WBC Title)
Julio Pablo Chacon KO 1 David Herrera
Takeo Imaoka Tech. Win 5 Toshiharu Saotome
Edgar Barcenas KO 1 Valentin Lopez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
John Michael Johnson KO 3 Jorge Reyes
Juan Carlos Ramirez W 12 Angel Rosario
Carlos Navarro KO 3 Marcos Badillo
Agapito Sanchez KO 5 Oscar Larios
Aristead Clayton Tech. Win 11 Andres Fernandez
Reynante Jamili KO 6 Isaac Sentuwa
Kozo Ishii KO 3 Yonkeun Chun
Taiji Okamoto KO 8 Palman Shin
Emanuel Lucero KO 1 Albert Padilla

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Paulie Ayala KO 4 Ivan Salazar
Luis Rolon D 12 Sergio Aguila

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
Jesper Jensen W 12 Victor Burgos
Victor Godoy W 12 Pedro Morquecho
Will Grigsby Tech. Draw 1
Fernando Ibarra
Akihiko Nago W 10 Keiji Yamaguchi
Raffy Montalban D 12 Kazuhiro Ryuko
Pone Nakonthorn-Parkview W 10 Ricky Sales

FLYWEIGHTS
Mike Trejo W 12 Mariano Gonzalez

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS
Saman Sorjaturong W 12
Ladislao Vazquez
(Retains WBC Title)
Ridhichai Kiatprabhas KO 6 Shin Terao

STRAWWEIGHTS
Ricardo Lopez W 12 Rosendo Alvarez
(Wins WBA Title)

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RINGSIDE REPORTS

FIGHTER *of the* MONTH

Over the course of his brilliant career and his remarkable eight years as WBC strawweight champion, Lopez had gotten used to having it easy. There was hardly a round he didn't win in his first 20 title defenses, rarely a moment when it seemed he wasn't on his way to victory.

But that all changed on March 14 in Mexico City, when Lopez found himself on the canvas for the first time in his career, staring up at then-WBA 105-pound champion Rosendo Alvarez. Lopez was not mentally prepared for the challenge, and was by some accounts lucky to escape with a draw when a headbutt-induced cut forced the fight to be stopped at the end of the seventh round.

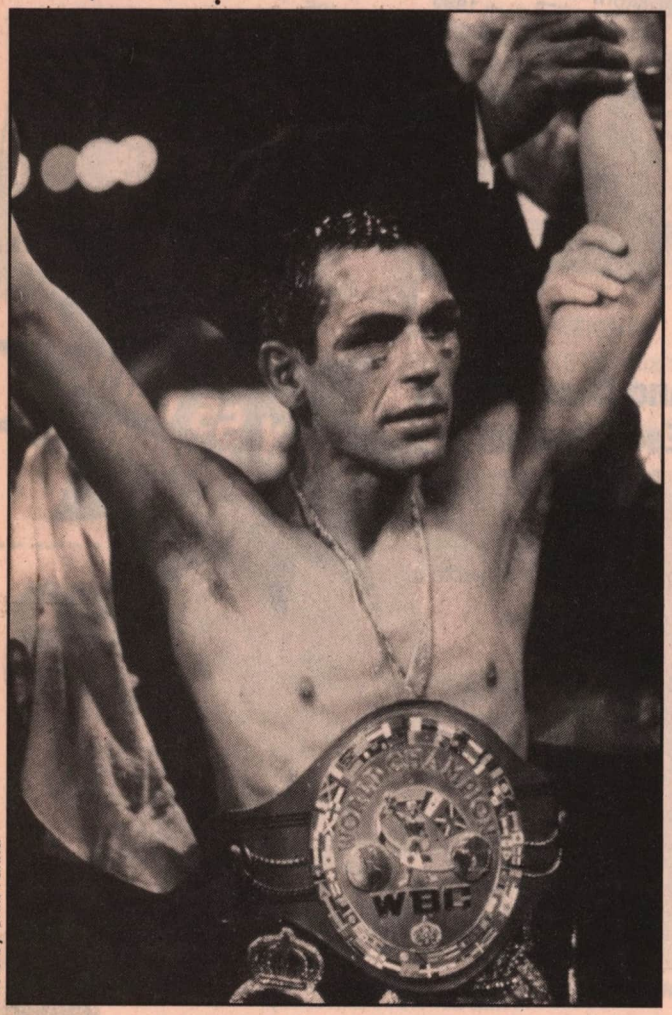

Photo by Chris Farina

So by the time the rematch rolled around on November 13, Lopez knew what he was in for. He knew it wouldn't be easy. He knew his younger opponent was a little bit stronger than he was, and when Alvarez failed to make weight the day before, Lopez knew he would be giving away a few pounds to "El Bufalo." But he was ready for war, and he delivered the gutsy performance critics have said he needed to cement his place in history.

By the fifth round, Alvarez' superior power was showing on "Finito's" face, but the Mexican wouldn't quit. He kept outworking, outhustling, and outthinking Alvarez, and though he crossed the finish line with four sizable gashes emblazoned on his mug, Lopez was every bit the winner, earning the WBA title by split decision.

• • • •

Ricardo Lopez

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Hamed was not his usual scintillating self against McCullough

Naseem Hamed W 12
Wayne McCullough

Atlantic City, New Jersey: The first indication that Hamed's heart wasn't in this fight came when he cut short his ring-entrance routine and half-sprinted the last 50 feet or so. If "The Prince" didn't feel like dragging out his specially prepared Halloween entrance, how could we expect him to feel like taking the fight with McCullough seriously?

Not that anybody else was taking the fight very seriously either. The light-punching, easy-to-hit McCullough seemed tailor made for Hamed to tee off on, and Naz' prediction of a knockout at 2:28 of the third round seemed reasonable to most. But instead of dazzling the crowd with his predicted quick kayo, Hamed bored the fans at the Boardwalk Convention Center with excessively degrading showboating that seemed to amuse nobody but himself.

Hamed, 125, Sheffield, England, pelted McCullough, 124, Belfast, Ireland, with a three-punch combination right at the opening bell, and had he remained so aggressive, his bold prediction might have come true. But he chose instead to backpedal and make faces throughout most of the rounds, throwing enough single powershots to redden McCullough's face and earn points on the scorecards. McCullough began landing in the second, but the blows had little effect, and Hamed became more aggressive in the third, especially around the 2:28 mark. But when he failed to put the tough Irishman away, the perhaps out-of-shape Prince shifted into a lower gear for the remainder of the fight.

With McCullough, 28, still giving chase in the seventh, Hamed turned up the obnoxiousness by staring at McCullough's corner with a smile on his face, daring his opponent to hit him while he looked away. Hamed, 24, landed a pair of outstanding uppercuts in the ninth, but when McCullough took those without flinching, it was apparent Hamed would be settling for a decision. He turned up his activity over the final three rounds, but it wasn't enough to quiet the catcalls that had been raining down from the seventh round on.

The boos continued as the unanimous decision in Hamed's favor was read. John Stewart (USA) had it 118-110, Nelson Vazquez (Puerto Rico) scored it 117-111, and Clark Sammartino (USA) saw it 116-112, the same as THE RING's scorecard.

"I had a laugh, had a dance, had a shuffle," Hamed, 31-0 (28), said at the postfight press conference, which he made far more entertaining than the fight by jawing with potential future opponent Angel Manfredy. "I did what I wanted to do, basically. I'm still the best featherweight in the world."

"He fought like an amateur," McCullough, 22-2 (14), said. "I just went after him, but what could I do? I did what I could. I didn't leave anything in the ring."

Among the many questions raised by Hamed's performance was that of how much longer he'll be with trainer Brendan Ingle, whose advice he was clearly ignoring throughout the fight. Another personnel question was answered the week after the fight when Hamed parted ways with tax-troubled promoter Frank Warren. The question of who his next opponent will be is also up in the air, with top candidates being mandatory challenger Juan Manuel Marquez in England or Mexican star Marco Antonio Barrera in Las Vegas.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Cedric Kushner

(10-31-98)

Eric Raskin

Vuyani Bungu W 12 Danny Romero

Atlantic City, New Jersey: For fans who crave the violent thrills that boxing frequently provides, Bungu's 12-round majority decision over Romero on the Naseem Hamed-Wayne McCullough card had to be a huge disappointment. But for connoisseurs of the sport's cerebral aspects, it was a rare glimpse into the scientific side of the Sweet Science.

Bungu, the low-key South African who has held the IBF junior featherweight title since August 1994, is an outstanding defensive boxer with a knack for shutting down an opponent's offense without resorting to running. Romero, on the other hand, seems caught between styles, a puncher who wants to be a boxer. And while the two-division former champion is a pretty good technician in his own right, he's no match for the wily Bungu when it comes to the sort of chess match that transpired at the Boardwalk Convention Center.

Romero, who promised a return of the aggressive bomber he'd been before being outboxed by Johnny Tapia in July '97, took the fight to the defending champion the first two rounds, but could never find his elusive target with regularity. Bungu, patient almost to a fault, bided his time and countered effectively enough to prevent Romero, 26, from becoming too reckless.

Seemingly discouraged by his inability to inflict serious damage, Romero began to temper his inside aggression after the third, and fought most of the remaining rounds at long range. But it didn't make much difference what style he employed; the challenger's hard hooks, which must have looked very impressive from the balcony, usually failed to connect cleanly.

Bungu, 122, wasn't all defense. His straight punches zipped between Romero's wide blows with enough steam and frequency to demoralize the Albuquerque, New Mexico, resident and impress the judges. But despite sporadic scoring by both, overall, it was a bout dominated by defense and missed punches. According to stats provided by CompuBox, Romero, 33-3 (29), landed just 280 of the 920 punches he threw. Bungu's connect percentage was even worse, as only 259 of his 995 punched found the mark.

Romero, 122, never stopped trying, and went all-out in the final three minutes, applying the kind of relentless pressure that used to be his trademark. It was not, however, enough to sway the judges, all of whom gave the 12th to the 31-year-old Bungu.

With such a scarcity of telling punches to go by, it was a very difficult fight to score, but the official verdict was within the bounds of reason. John Riley (USA) had it even at 114-114, but was overruled by Lulani Mtya (South Africa) and James Ashe (USA), who voted for Bungu by tallies of 117-112 and 115-114, respectively. While Mtya's score was over-generous to his countryman, THE RING agreed that Bungu, 36-2 (18), had done enough to record his 12th title defense by a score of 116-113. The referee was Rudy Battle (USA).

Television: HBO
Promoter: Cedric Kushner
(10-31-98)
Nigel Collins

Marco Antonio Barrera KO 3 Richie Wenton

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Barrera, 122, asserted his worthiness as a future opponent for Naseem Hamed with a convincing stoppage of Wenton on the Hamed-Wayne McCullough card. So convincing, in fact, that many among the 8,138 fans on hand at the Boardwalk Convention Center went home believing that the Mexican slugger would chop "The Prince" in half with his withering body attack if he ever gets the opportunity.

Wenton, 121, Liverpool, England, reportedly suffered an anxiety attack in his dressing room and had to be talked into going through with the fight. But you wouldn't have guessed it once he got into the ring. Both men came out throwing serious punches, and Wenton gave almost as good as he got, especially with his right cross, during a blazing opening round.

It was more of the same in the second, as Barrera fielded several right hands flush on the face as he surged forward, eager to find a home for his wicked left hook. But Wenton, with only nine knockouts on his 22-4 record, simply lacked the firepower to keep Barrera off of him. And in the third, he twice collapsed in a heap after absorbing rib-bending hooks to the body. Wenton, 31, somehow made it to the end of the round, but his cor-

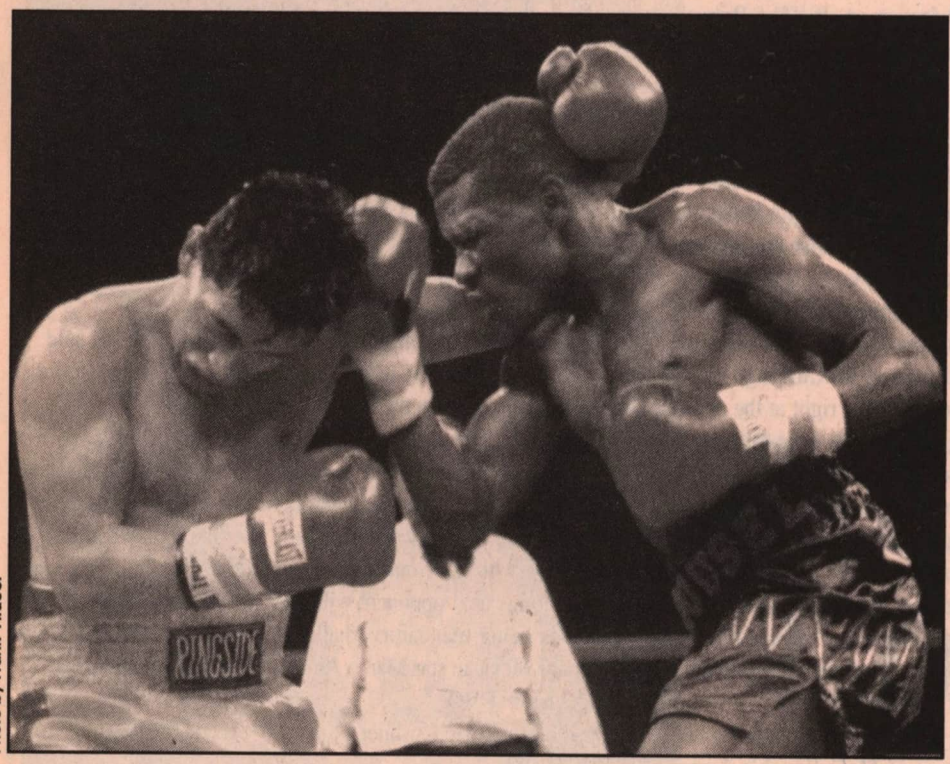

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Bungu barrels inside en route to majority decision win over Romero

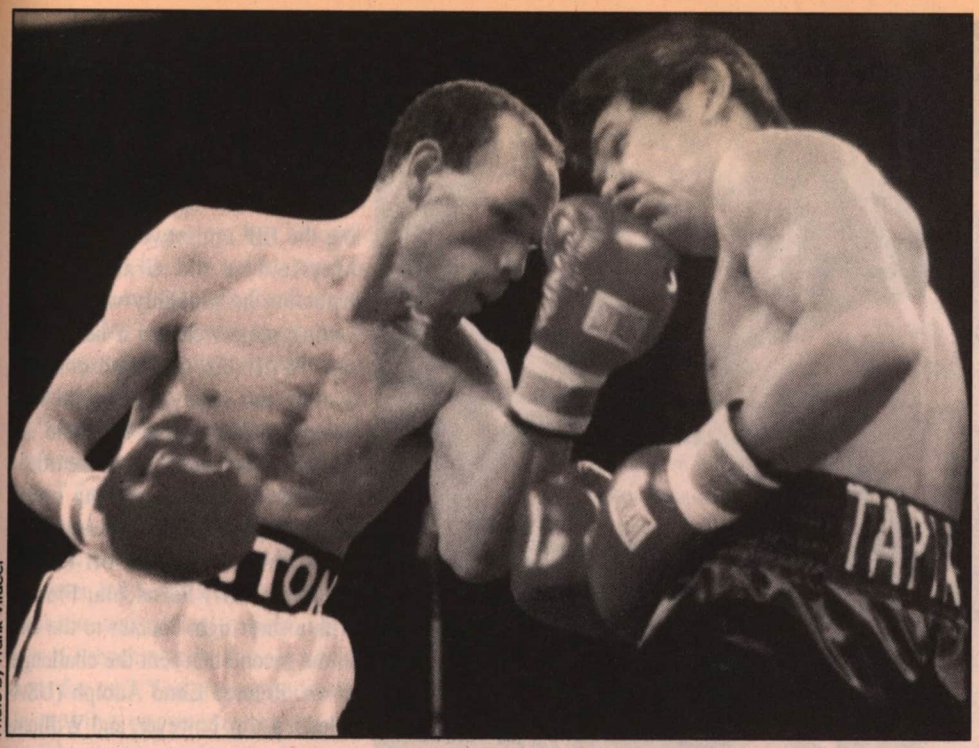

Photo by Frank Vitucci

Barrera's face was easy to find, but he subdued Wenton with bodyshots

ner wisely refused to allow him out for the fourth.

It was the 24-year-old Barrera's fourth win since his back-to-back losses to Junior Jones, and it improved his record to 47-2 (35). Whether or not he's quick enough to catch Hamed remains to be seen, but it sure is going to be fun watching him try.

The referee was Ed Johnson (USA).

Promoter: Cedric Kushner

(10-31-98)

Nigel Collins

Sven Ottke W 12 Charles Brewer

Dusseldorf, Germany: It was a shocker at the Philips Halle. Ottke, 167¼, Germany, made his 13th professional fight unlucky for Brewer, 167½, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by taking the IBF super middleweight title by split decision. It was Brewer's fourth defense since stopping Gary Ballard in June of '97 for the vacant title.

The unfancied German had 330 bouts as an amateur, but was regarded as much too inexperienced as a pro to present a genuine threat to Brewer's progression. A third-round destruction of mandatory challenger Antoine Byrd had underlined Brewer's stunning potential, while he demonstrated maturity and persistence in stopping slippery veteran Herol Graham. Perhaps "The Hatchet" could feel aggrieved by the scoring of the German judge who had the challenger winning eight rounds to four. But he cannot dispute that he failed to stamp sufficient authority on the fight and committed the cardinal error of coasting through the final round, convinced another victory was already his. Had the Italian judge given Brewer the last round instead of Ottke, the American would have retained the title with a draw.

The exchanges were close throughout, with Ottke's movement and rapid delivery of punches frustrating and bemusing Brewer from early on. Though taller, Brewer, 29, was often beaten to the jab, and his power was negated by the 31-year-old Ottke's tight defense and sharp reflexes. He did break through in the eighth and brought blood from the German's nose, but he could not press home his advantage. At the weigh-in, Brewer had to remove his pants to scale under the 168-pound limit, and his staying power may have been affected by making weight.

Both men's faces were marked by the finish, though for Ottke it was worth it. Manfred Kuchler (Germany) and Luca D'Atrole (Italy) scored for him by 116-112 and 115-113, respectively. George Hill (USA) was maybe guilty of patriotism, too, scoring 117-112 for Brewer. THE RING had it 115-113 for Brewer.

Promoter: Sauerland Promotions

(10-24-98)

Brian Doogan

Vinny Pazienza W 10 Arthur Allen

Ledyard, Connecticut: Pazmania is back in full swing, even if the final destination is a bit unclear. In the second fight of his return to Foxwoods Casino, after being exiled for several years for intemperate remarks, Pazienza packed the Fox Theater and banged out a 10-round unanimous decision over Allen. This was the middle bout in a three-bout sequence that manager Bill Cayton had envisioned leading to a mid-winter shot at the IBF super middleweight title. Pazienza held up his end, winning both bouts and reinvigorating the Foxwoods boxing program with a pair of instant sellout houses, but two weeks before the Allen fight, intended opponent Charles Brewer lost the IBF belt to Sven Ottke.

Allen, 169, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was a substitute after original opponent Kevin Pompey fell out, and he was chosen in part because of his strong showing in a decision loss six months ago to Pazienza's regional rival, Dana Rosenblatt. A more impressive Paz win over Allen would be one way to stifle Rosenblatt's persistent calls for a rematch of his 1996 loss to Paz.

Pazienza, 169, Cranston, Rhode Island, ultimately also failed to stop Allen. But while Rosenblatt fought Allen cautiously and methodically, as is his wont, Pazienza fought like Allen had stolen his cappuccino money. Pazienza was wild, reckless, alternately foolish and cunning, and always dramatic. As a boxing exhibition, it had its flaws, but as entertainment it was matchless, the usual soap-opera-on-wheels every Pazienza bout becomes. Pazienza actually concentrated on a body attack in the early rounds, and landing his haymakers to Allen's chin became

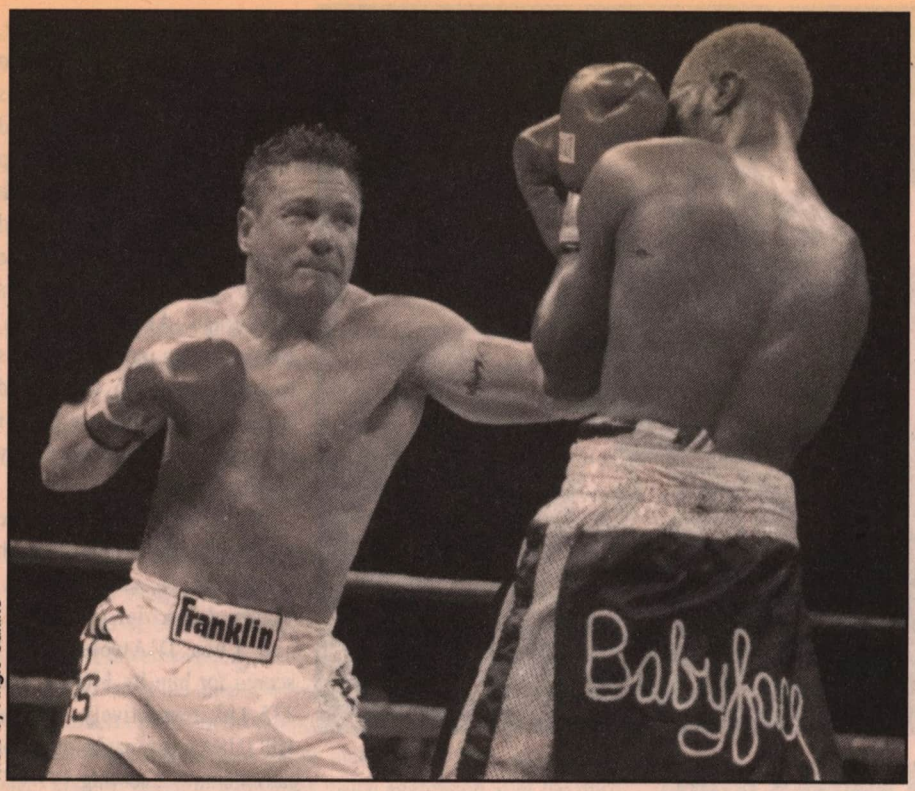

Photo by Angie Carlino

Pazienza dominated early and held on to beat Allen

secondary to punishing his ribs with thudding hooks.

Pazienza, 35, swept the first five rounds fairly easily, outworking and outlanding Allen, 26, and throwing the far more powerful shots. But when Allen refused to take a backward step, Pazienza took the sixth round off to regroup. He also took it easy in the eighth and didn't exert himself unduly in the ninth, while Allen landed a few solid crosses and began to gain some confidence. The 10th was a barnburner from start to finish, with Pazienza and Allen combining for one of the busiest rounds ESPN2 will ever broadcast. Paz landed 55 of his 115 punches, while Allen scored with 44 of his 123.

Judge Harold Lederman (USA) saw it 97-93, Joe Dwyer (USA) had it 98-93, and Will Ackerman (USA) scored it 96-94, all for Pazienza, 43-7 (28). The referee was Matt Mullady (USA).

"A couple of times, I let Arthur back into the fight because I got lazy," Pazienza correctly observed.

"It was a lot of fun," Allen, 24-4 (8), added from behind big postfight sunglasses. "Vinny's a very strong young man ... well, he's not young. A couple of times, Vinny would get down, and the crowd would start yelling, and he'd come at me with a six- or seven-punch combination, and I'd be thinking, *What can I do to shut these people up?*"

Cayton says he may be able to get a title challenge against Ottke, but the hook is that it will likely have to be in Germany, not the preferred site.

"We've got to figure out how to build a Foxwoods over there before the fight," said casino executive Joe Carter, not entirely in jest.

Promoter: Classic Entertainment & Sports
(11-6-98)
Jay Miller

Arthur Williams KO 9 Imamu Mayfield

Biloxi, Mississippi: After two failed world title bids in 1994, Williams finally made his nickname, "King Arthur," applicable by wresting the IBF cruiserweight title from Mayfield at the Grand Casino. Knowing he probably wouldn't be getting another chance if he lost this one, Williams, 33, used constant activity and steady pressure to wear down the 26-year-old Mayfield and spoil his second defense of the title.

After a cautious opening round, Mayfield, 186½, New Brunswick, New Jersey, caught an off-balance Williams, 187, Pensacola, Florida, with a short right counter to the chin in the second that sent the challenger down. Referee Elmo Adolph (USA) ruled it a slip, however, and Williams began finding his rhythm by the end of the round. Mayfield began running in the third, but Williams kept the pressure on and connected with his first damaging shot in the fourth, a right hand that forced Mayfield to grab the ropes to stay up. Another right caused one of the champion's gloves to touch the canvas, but again Adolph waved off the knockdown. Finally, with about 20 seconds left in the round, a perfect right cross to the jaw floored Mayfield, and he had to grab onto Williams to last until the bell.

A cut formed under the still-groggy Mayfield's left eye in the fifth, and strong bodyshots by Williams threatened to close the door on the champion. But Mayfield came back in the sixth, dazing the challenger with a right uppercut during what was clearly meant to be a rest round for Williams. With five seconds left before the bell, Mayfield landed a left while stepping on Williams' foot, and it sent King Arthur down. This one *was* ruled a knockdown by Adolph. Go figure.

Williams increased his lead in the seventh and eighth, and by the ninth it was clear Mayfield was going to need a knockout to retain the title. But it was Williams who came out blazing, flooring Mayfield with a textbook left-right combination. Mayfield got up on shaky legs at five and tried bravely to fire back, but Williams battered him until a right to the chin sent Mayfield, 18-2 (14), flopping forward into Adolph's arms. The referee called the fight off without a count at 1:50 of the round, sending Williams, 29-4-1 (20), leaping into the air in the center of the ring.

Williams announced afterward that he would pursue title unification, but unlike most new champions who spout the same confident discourse, Williams looks like he may be a man of his word. WBA cruiser champ Fabrice Tiozzo indicated in November that negotiations were underway for Williams to come to France to face him.

Television: ESPN2
Promoter: M&M Sports
(10-30-98) ■

Roy Jones

(Continued from page 37)

mask like the ones Picasso used to paint. Somehow Hill got up, but he could not straighten up, his ribs and his spirit having been broken at 1:10 of the fourth round. So it has gone for Jones, who insists he understands that on any night everything can be reversed in boxing.

"I know anything can happen, but I just don't think anyone can beat Roy Jones in his time," Jones said. "I'm sure Sugar Ray Robinson rests comfortably [in his grave] when he sees Roy Jones Jr. fight, throwing six, seven left hands at a time. Taking things from him and adding to them. Lord, have mercy! I shock myself. You see anybody out there for me? You see anybody out there destroying opponents the way Toney was?"

The only one is Jones, but Jones cannot fight himself. As a matter of fact, just the thought of that seemed to chill the Pensacola pugilist for the first time.

"Fight *myself*?" said an incredulous Jones when asked how he would combat himself if given the chance. "I wouldn't do it. People have no idea what it takes to get up in that ring with Roy Jones Jr. It's hard for them, but it's like they're getting paid to play the lottery. That's why I like cockfighting. Every chicken has a chance to win if he's a fighter. Same here."

Oddly, Grant seemed to express a similar notion several days before the fight when asked about the difficulty of facing someone who is arguably the best fighter in the world. Grant thought about that for a moment before explaining it in the best terms he could think of.

"Looking at his record, I can't do much worse than the 39 guys he fought previously," Grant said, apparently already putting himself in the past tense three days before he faced Jones. "I'm not unrealistic. I'm not looking to win the lottery, but if I go in and stick to my battle plan, I should be okay. Win or lose, I'll be ahead of the game because of the exposure.

"I'm not looking to land one shot on Roy and knock him out. Who's done that? Why should I? I don't think I'm going to go in there and teach Roy Jones a lesson. But if I don't get caught early, I think I'll give him as formidable a challenge as he's had."

Unfortunately for Otis Grant, as Jones himself admitted, that wasn't saying much.

"I have never gone into the ring thinking there was a possibility of losing," Jones said. "I don't know what that feels like. I've been in with guys who were faster or who punched harder, but I always knew I was smarter. I'm the man; I'm the best. I do whatever I have to do to win."

Jones also does what he can to help boxing and its practitioners. Only four days before the Grant fight, he left training to come to New York City's Roseland Ballroom and host a benefit screening of a new HBO documentary on Ray Robinson's great career and sad ending. More than 400 attendees helped raise money to establish an educational trust fund for the three children of former middleweight champion Gerald McClellan. Once McClellan had been a fearsome puncher with 29 knockouts in 31 victories and was seen as a potential defining moment for Jones, who had been his friend and rival since their amateur days.

Then, on the night of February 25, 1995, McClellan stepped into a London ring to challenge WBC super middleweight champion Nigel Benn in what was to become a furious fight for survival. For 10 rounds they fought, both men going down, both men bleeding, both men hurt and in trouble before McClellan simply fell to his knees and seemed to concede defeat. Benn's last punch didn't seem devastating, but minutes later, McClellan collapsed in his corner, and since that day he has seen only shadows.

A fighter unable to stand or walk or think for long, McClellan is now a champion dethroned so completely he lives in the dark, the same place Ray Robinson ended up. So Jones decided to try and help both because he felt it was right and because he understands this could happen to anyone.

"People called me 'The Reluctant Warrior,'" Jones said. "Maybe I was, but I know what can happen in boxing. If I'm going to take that risk, I want to get paid well for it. It takes a lot to put yourself on the line night after night, not knowing what can happen to us. We never know when the end may come, no matter how good you are. The only thing that's certain is that it's on the way.

"Gerald McClellan could have been Roy Jones Jr. or anyone else. We only box for a short part of our lives, and the longer it goes, the worse it can be. We need to learn from these situations and stick together, because in boxing, when you win, you win with everybody. But when you lose, you lose alone."

Jones seems in no danger of losing anytime soon. When the landscape of the light heavyweight division is surveyed, there seems to be no one who is in his league, and the same is true if he retreats to 168 pounds. So that leaves only the heavyweight division, but Jones said that his interest in that experiment has waned since he decided not to fight Buster Douglas a year ago.

"I still think about it, but not as much," he said.

With the heavyweight division closed to him, Jones must remain patient as he contemplates his future. He must wait either to bring his career to a premature end, as he says he might when his HBO contract ends, or wait for the night when someone young and brave and strong and fast is having his way with him, a night he knows is inevitable for any fighter if he stays around long enough.

"If you try to fight and fight and fight," Jones said, "you're not going to come out good. Three or four more fights, and I may stop. When I feel I'm slowing up a little bit, I'll stop. I know about Ray Robinson's career and how it went. I'm not going to trade my health for $7-million. Being my only adviser, I've had to learn not to listen to things. The highlight of my career has been adversity [his gold medal robbery at the Seoul Olympics and his disqualification loss to Griffin]. So I don't worry about what my critics say. If they could do what I do, they'd be in the position I'm in. This is no damn hockey game. This is dangerous work. There's no reason to stick around any longer than you have to."

If Jones sticks to those beliefs, he may not stick around long enough to face that great challenger the boxing world so wants him to meet. And if he doesn't, whose fault is that?

"When history is written, people will say, 'He was right [about his own greatness],'" Jones insisted. "People won't realize it until it's over, but they'll remember one day how they thought James Toney would beat me. That was the high point. I passed my test, and that was it." ■

Ron Borges covers boxing for the Boston Globe and is a regular contributor to this magazine.

De La Hoya vs. Quartey

(Continued from page 42)

was October 17, 1997. De La Hoya has fought three times since then, racking up a trio of wins over Wilfredo Rivera (KO 8), Patrick Charpentier (KO 3), and Chavez (KO 8). Quartey, meanwhile, has been limited to sparring and punching the heavy-bag.

Obviously, there's a tremendous amount on the line for both fighters besides their unbeaten records. De La Hoya wants to go down in history as an all-time great, and a loss to Quartey certainly wouldn't help his cause. And you have to wonder how many advertisers would be as anxious as they are now to use him as their spokesman after a crushing defeat. If anything, Quartey has even more motivation. He's getting by far the biggest purse of his career, a reported $4-million, and if he loses, he'll most likely never come close to earning that kind of money again. And don't think that Quartey doesn't realize that becoming the first man to beat De La Hoya will give him a status that he could only have dreamed of when growing up in poverty-stricken Bukom.

So when you add it all up and take all the factors into consideration, who is going to be the one with a smile on his face and the green WBC belt around his waist at the end of the day?

The guess here is De La Hoya. Quartey is going to make it difficult, and hopefully exciting, but at some point, probably in the later rounds, he's going to get tagged—and hurt. Unlike Jose Luis Lopez, who was too slow and too unimaginative to find the finisher when he floored a weary Quartey in the 11th round, De La Hoya will finish the job. After that, all the De La Hoya-haters will have to whine about is that he hasn't fought Felix Trinidad yet. But that's another unopened present for another day. Let's see what surprises are in this box first. ■

New Face

(Continued from page 18)

and I couldn't attend the funeral. But I stayed strong. I knew I was going to be home soon, but boxing gave me discipline. Some of the guards in jail kept me in tune with everything as far as boxing. I shadow-boxed in my cell. I stayed on top of things. Actually, being in jail made me more hungry than when I was home."

Covington cherishes his freedom now. Waking up for an early morning run is much different from being told when to wake up, when to go to bed, or when he could see his family. He doesn't want to go through that again. Boxing, he feels, is his ticket to financial stability.

After being released from prison, Covington was assigned to a half-way facility, the Bo Robinson House in Trenton. Luckily, Covington knew some staff members there, which made the transition more comfortable. He didn't like the stigma of being called an ex-con, or being associated with drugs, however. For the first time in his life, Covington felt someone trusted him other than his family and small circle of friends. It was a good feeling.

He was a model resident, which earned him a position as assistant director. When he was discharged in '97, the administrators of Bo Robinson offered him a job if he wanted it after his boxing career is over.

Boxing was a career Alice Covington never wanted her son to pursue. Michael liked music, and started playing the cello when he was in third grade. A few years later, an uncle brought him to a local gym and introduced him to boxing. By then, an ugly pattern was beginning to develop. Covington was being sucked into a parallel lifestyle at the tender age of 11.

"When I was a juvenile, I was bad, getting into bad things," Covington recalled. "I was getting in trouble with the law, stealing, vandalizing things, cars, houses, even trying to rob trains. I was that bad. I was just young and I had some friends that were bad."

He never lost his love of boxing, but the cello went by the wayside, despite the fact he was offered college scholarships to play.

"I'll admit I still think about how far I could have gone with it," Covington said.

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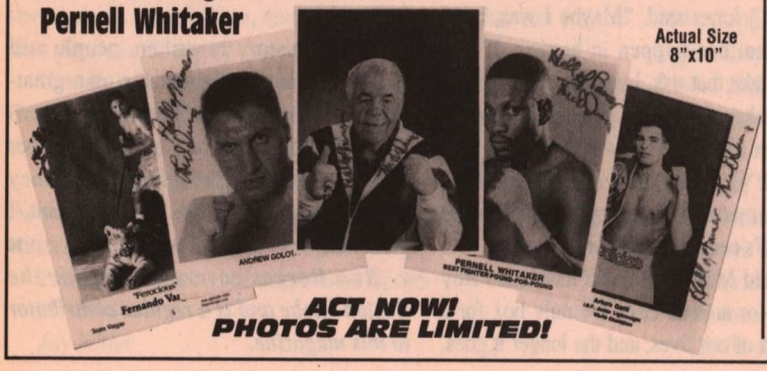

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"I remember taking the thing home from school. It was bigger than me. My friends couldn't believe it. I'm rusty now, but if I had kept with it, I think I could have been in a big-city orchestra playing the cello."

Tommy Brooks, the former co-trainer of heavyweight champion Evander Holyfield and presently the head trainer of Mike Tyson, sees big possibilities for Covington. In the eyes of Brooks, who worked with Covington briefly when he was a sparring partner for Charles Murray in '95, he possesses the ability to be a top-notch fighter.

"Michael's a great, great kid," Brooks said. "He has the potential to be a champion. He has good boxing ability and he catches on real quick. His movement is very good. He's more a boxer than a puncher, but that's the way he was taught and the way he was brought up in the fight game, to hit and not to be hit.

"I think Michael just needs an opportunity. He's a beautiful kid. I didn't believe it when he was first arrested. It was the type of thing where he was at the wrong place at the wrong time, almost like the Pope got arrested. I think his personality makes him unique. His willingness to learn sets him apart. He'd ask me, 'What more can I do, what do I need to work on?' In these times, it's an awesome achievement to even hear a kid say those things. It's a shame not many trainers get to work with kids like that anymore. I wish I had the time to work more with him."

Vinny LaManna heads Bam Boxing, the management group that represents Covington. He saw the same ability as Brooks did, and then some. LaManna has been a constant in Covington's life the last three years, sticking by the fighter through his most turbulent times. LaManna met the young man just before he went to jail in '95. He'd watch Covington honing his skills at Buffano's Gym in Jersey City each week, and began to know him beyond the gym. Eventually, LaManna became one of three people comprising Covington's management team.

"I was with two other guys, and they left Mike when he went to prison," said LaManna, who used to co-manage Imamu Mayfield, the former IBF cruiserweight champion. "I'm not a quitter, and it's not about the little bit of money I had put into him. Other than his family, he had nobody. I knew he had ability and the potential to be a great fighter. I've had people close to me incarcerated, and people leave them. I know what it's like. I have a true liking for Michael. I stuck with him because I felt he deserved some loyalty in his life."

When Covington sees Mosley these days, he has the strength not to wallow in envy over the success Sugar Shane is having as a professional. He no longer blinks and wonders, *what if*?

"Shane's success kind of motivates me more," Covington said. "He still remembers me, which makes me feel good. He's always telling me to keep doing the same things I did as an amateur and stay positive. I could get there where he is now. That's what keeps me going; that's what keeps me motivated. I look at it that way, much more than envy him. I'll have what he has one day, and soon." ■

Shane Mosley

(Continued from page 27)

against different opponents until my body adjusts to 140 pounds naturally."

Sharmba Mitchell: Mosley considers the WBA junior welterweight titlist the most formidable champion of all, and is quick to admit he would need intensive preparation to beat him.

"I have a lot of respect for him and think he will be a very difficult opponent," he said. "He has strengthened all of his abilities over the years and is a very crafty southpaw. To beat him, I would have to work on a good strategy to offset his awkward southpaw style. To be the best, you have to beat the best. At this time, I would probably consider him the best in the division."

Zab Judah: Mosley considers the 21-year-old southpaw Judah an "excellent young fighter," but adds, "he knocks out guys so quick, I haven't seen much of him yet." He envisions Judah becoming a major player with more exposure, and imagines a superfight with him a year or two down the road. Although Sugar Shane doesn't actually admit it, you can't help but get the impression he sees a lot of himself in the youngster and predicts great things for him.

(Continued on page 60)

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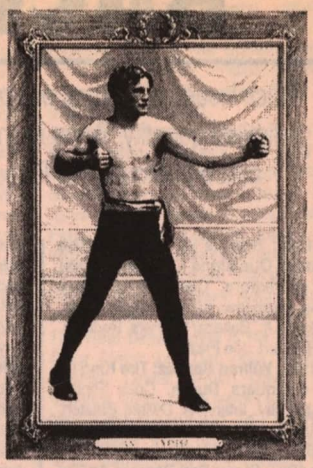

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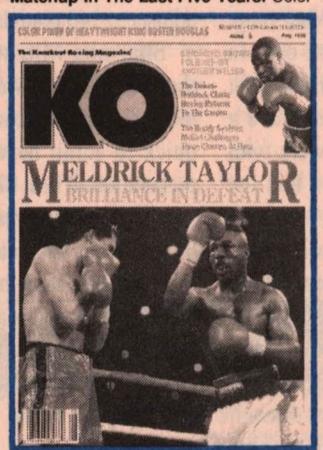

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Shane Mosley

(Continued from page 57)

"I hope he keeps winning," said Mosley. "He's got the potential to be a real superstar, and a fight between us could make us both a lot of money some day. That is a fight I definitely see happening."

A matchup that whets the appetite of DiBella is Chavez vs. Arturo Gatti at 140 pounds, with the winner possibly facing Mosley next year. The network's deep pockets could easily lure Bazan out of Mexico and Mendy out of France, although it is fairly certain that Mosley will move to the junior welterweight division sooner rather than later. Because of the network's positive relationship with Phillips, Chavez, Tszyu, and Gonzalez, those fights could conceivably happen in timely fashion. The fact that Mitchell is promoted by Don King makes that bout a near impossibility. While Judah is certainly a most intriguing matchup, it is still a year or more away from generating the kind of interest and revenue it will be capable of once Judah ingratiates himself to the public with his Wheaties-box smile and immense ring talents.

HBO is in the business of creating superstars, and in Mosley they have signed a crown jewel. He is a manager's, promoter's, and journalist's dream. Not only is he eager to fight often, unlike so many crybaby champions, he is willing to fight anybody. That, says DiBella, could quite possibly make him the fighter of this generation.

"We haven't even seen the best of him yet," mused DiBella. "Just imagine what we'll be saying when we do. There might not be words to describe him." ■

Robert Mladinich, a freelance writer based in New York City, is a regular contributor to this magazine.

Pugilistic Politicians

(Continued from page 34)

tamweight champion Johnny Tapia is around, it's amazing just how invisible "Too Sharp" can be. This makes him an excellent candidate to direct covert opera-

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tions for the CIA. They can't stop what they can't see.

•Welterweight Oscar De La Hoya and featherweight Prince Naseem Hamed, on the other hand, are 500,000-watt dollar signs that incite every fighter within five weight classes—including guys who retired three or four Presidents ago—to hurl challenges at them in hopes of signing a lucrative contract. When "The Golden Boy" or "The Prince" talk deals, people listen. These may be just the guys we need to once and for all negotiate a fair-trade treaty with the Japanese.

But if that doesn't work, think about Rocky Marciano and Joe Louis as our envoys to Tokyo. They would accomplish more inside of three minutes than our State and Commerce Department professionals have in the last 25 years.

•Bob Arum. A Harvard law grad, this big-time promoter may be best remembered for his refreshing statement, "Yesterday I was lying. Today I'm telling the truth." A man who thinks like that is capable of going straight to the top in politics. In fact, if you can think of anyone with more suitable credentials to take over for Bill Clinton, go ahead and nominate her. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING's West Coast correspondent

Coley Wallace

(Continued from page 47)

been called the "Duration Heavyweight Champion" during World War II, when Louis was in the Army. Jimmy Bivins had been fighting since 1940, and in his rookie year scored a win over legendary Charley Burley. In the succeeding years, his other victims included past or future champions Teddy Yarosz, Billy Soose, Gus Lesnevich, Joey Maxim, Ezzard Charles, and Archie Moore.

When he met Wallace on September 19, 1952, Bivins was 37 and shopworn, but still full of tricks, such as the sneak right hand he threw as soon as the bell opened the bout at St. Nick's. But Wallace kept him on the end of the jab that looked familiar to Gillette fight announcer Don Dunphy. "They're hard jabs, reminiscent of the Joe Louis jabs when Joe was coming on up," he told the national radio audience.

Wallace was leading by scores of 7-1, 6-2, and 5-3, when the bell rang for round nine. Before its echo died, the lights went out. Bivins—"smarter than a treeful of owls," in the words of Bill Corum, Dunphy's broadcast partner—came out launching that sneak right again. It caught Wallace on the button, and the fight was over 17 seconds into the round.

"I made a mistake," said Wallace simply.

Still, Wallace started 1953 as a ranked heavyweight. He was training to fight Billy Young when Hollywood came calling. Director Stirling Silliphant appeared at the gym to talk to him about the celluloid Joe Louis biography United Artists planned to make that year. The famous director had heard about the fighter who looked like a young Louis, and upon seeing for himself, offered the starring role to Wallace.

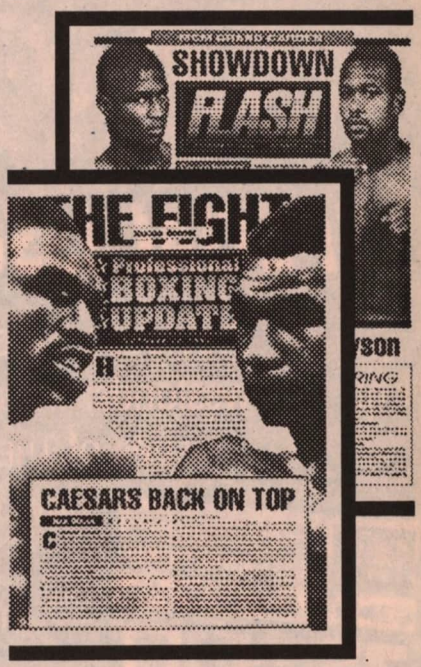
The Joe Louis Story covered the life of its subject from his early violin-playing days in Detroit up to the Marciano fight. Much of the four-month shoot was done at Grossinger's training camp in upstate New York. No fight scenes were filmed because footage of Joe's actual bouts was used. Silliphant's directions for his star were simple: "Be yourself, take your time, live the past."

The movie opened in the fall of '53 to mostly favorable reviews. Wallace, in his first acting role, was well-received by the critics. Bosley Crowther of *The New York Times* wrote that Silliphant was "fortunate in casting [Wallace] as Louis. For his young Negro leading man not only has publicity value as an authentic heavyweight contender, but also bears a remarkable resemblance to The Brown Bomber. Although it is Mr. Wallace's first screen role, he obviously is amenable to direction. He is a close approximation of the expressionless, imperturbable Louis in deed if not word ... As Joe Louis, Coley Wallace leaves an impression of an unlettered but decent youth who always tried to do the best with the only tools he knew how to use. The slight aura of amateurishness surrounding his portrayal seems fitting in this case."

Time magazine's critic said the movie "should take the public on points. The

(Continued on page 63)

Worldwide guide to pro boxing



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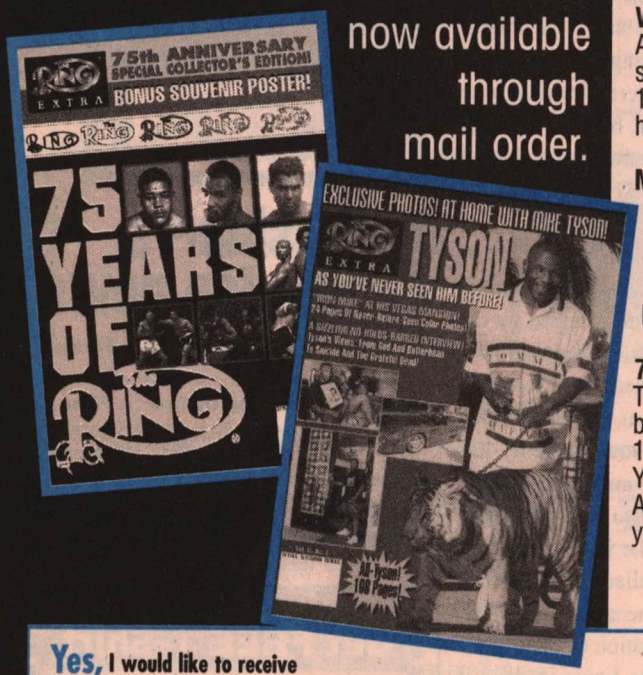

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Coley Wallace

(Continued from page 61)

main point is that Coley Wallace is convincing as Joe Louis." *Newsweek* called the film "simple and convincing," and "as natural as Coley Wallace's massive strolling walk. The fabricated drama blends perfectly easily with the historic shots of Louis versus Carnera, Schmeling, Braddock, and Max Baer."

"Coley Wallace is natural and engaging as Joe," said *Catholic World*, and even Moira Walsh of the influential *America* overcame her distaste for both boxing and big-screen biographies of sports heroes, proclaiming *The Joe Louis Story* "a valid screen representation of simple human dignity," and noting that "thanks to the casting in the title role of Coley Wallace—not only an ingratiating actor, but also very close to Louis in physical appearance—it was virtually impossible to tell it wasn't him in the newsreel footage of Joe's fights."

Not all thumbs pointed up, however. "Coley Wallace tries to be smooth and nonchalant, but his slow, unassuming walk and business of switching from deadpan to face-covering grin became tiresome," wrote Manny Farber in *The Nation*. He also objected to the portrayal of Louis as "a sort of saint who did nothing worse than play hooky from his violin lessons and eat too much cake before the Schmeling upset."

In his 1978 autobiography, the subject of the movie himself had a mixed and typically succinct reaction to Hollywood's treatment of his life. "It wasn't a bad movie," wrote Louis, "but it wasn't too good, either."

You may judge for yourself by renting the video or catching *The Joe Louis Story* during one of its semi-regular screenings in the wee hours on the American Movie Classics cable-TV network. But the movie, which cost around $400,000 to make, landed with a Galento-like thud at the box office. According to Wallace, he never even received the second of two $10,000 paychecks he was supposed to get for starring in the movie because whatever revenue it generated was attached by the Internal Revenue Service to whittle down Louis' massive bill for back income taxes. But the experience was a happy one anyway for Wallace because it cemented a firm bond between him and Louis.

"He always called me 'Junior,'" said Wallace, "and every time I'd see him he'd give me a hundred-dollar bill. If he saw me twice in a day, I'd get a fresh hundred the second time. We had so much fun."

The big question now that he had played one of the greatest heavyweights in boxing history on film was, as the headline in a multi-page spread on Wallace in *Look* magazine asked: "Can He Live The Past?"

The answer came on December 16, 1953, when the ninth-ranked Wallace was thoroughly taken apart by former champion Ezzard Charles at the Civic Auditorium in San Francisco. Though much smaller and lighter, Charles' superiority was never in doubt, and he knocked Wallace down in the eighth round and twice in the 10th before the fight was stopped.

Nevertheless, Wallace claims he would have been in line for a shot at Marciano—who'd never forgotten that loss to him in the Golden Gloves—had he been able to get past another rival from the amateur days. But Bob Baker decisively beat him twice in 1954, and after two more successive losses, the new Joe Louis went the way of the old one—into retirement, with a 20-7 record. So much for a Hollywood ending.

"He gave it the old college try," says ring historian Hank Kaplan of Wallace. "He was a game guy. He was very tall, of course, and generally speaking, real tall guys in those days just didn't have the athletic aptitude these guys do today. He could punch and had some boxing ability, but just didn't have enough of each to make it."

In his own review of his career, Wallace—a retired barber who still has his actors' guild card and has appeared in *Raging Bull* and a few other motion pictures—sounds a lot like the man he reminded so many of in those days.

"I feel good," he says, "and I can respect myself as a man." ■

Pete Ehrmann, a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, is a regular contributor to this magazine.

The RING

'60s & '70s ISSUES

With Muhammad Ali, Carlos Monzon, Jose Napoles, and Roberto Duran leading the way, the 1960s and 1970s was surely a star-studded era. The Ring, of course, was around to cover all of these superstars and their superbouts. A limited supply of back issues from those decades are still available for $10 each (including postage and handling).

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The RING® READERS' POLL

Due to the tremendous flood of responses THE RING *received in the first few weeks after the Readers' Poll hit the newsstands, we've decided to give readers who may have missed that issue an opportunity to respond. And if you simply didn't get around to sending in your selections, here's your second chance. Either clip these two pages out of the magazine or photocopy them, and send your responses to* ***THE RING Readers' Poll, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034.*** *The results will be printed in an upcoming issue.*

1. Who is the best fighter in the world today, pound-for-pound?_____

2. Who is the greatest fighter of all-time, pound-for-pound?_____

3. Who is the greatest heavyweight of all-time?_____

4. Who is the most entertaining fighter in the world today?_____

5. Who is the least entertaining fighter in the world today_____

6. Who is the most entertaining fighter of all-time?_____

7. Who is the least entertaining fighter of all-time?_____

8. Who is the most overrated fighter in the world today?_____

9. Who is the most underrated fighter in the world today?_____

10. Who is the most overrated fighter of all-time?_____

11. Who is the most underrated fighter of all-time?_____

(Questions 12 through 24 concern only ***active*** *fighters, judged regardless of weight class)*

12. Who is boxing's hardest puncher?_____

13. Who is boxing's most courageous fighter?_____

14. Who has the best jab?_____

15. Who has the best right hand?_____

16. Who has the best left hook?_____

17. Who is the best bodypuncher?_____

18. Who is the best infighter?_____

19. Who has the best defense?_____

20. Who has the fastest hands?_____

21. Who has the best footwork?_____

22. Who has the best chin?_____

23. Who is the biggest overachiever?_____

24. Who is the biggest underachiever?_____

(Questions 25 through 38 concern only the best and worst ***current*** *non-participants)*

25. Who is the best promoter?_____

26. Who is the worst promoter?_____

27. Who is the best trainer?_____

28. Who is the worst trainer?_____

29. Who is the best referee?_____

30. Who is the worst referee?_____

31. Who is the best ring announcer?_____

32. Who is the worst ring announcer?_____

33. Who is the best blow-by-blow commentator?_____

_____

34. Who is the worst blow-by-blow commentator?_____

_____

35. Who is the best color commentator?_____

_____

36. Who is the worst color commentator?_____

_____

37. What is the best television network to watch boxing on?

_____

38. What is the worst television network to watch boxing on?

_____

39. What potential match would you most like to see?_____

_____

40. What is the most competitive division in boxing today?___

_____

41. What is the best venue in the world today to watch a fight at?_____

42. Who is the active fighter you would most like to see retire?

_____

43. Are you in favor of women's boxing?_____

_____

44. Is Butterbean good or bad (or neither) for boxing?_____

_____

45. Are you in favor of headgear for pros?_____

_____

46. Should pros be allowed to box in the Olympics?_____

_____

47. Are you in favor of the standing eight-count?_____

_____

48. Are you in favor of a Federal boxing commission?_____

_____

49. What rule would you most like to see changed?_____

_____

50. Who do you predict will be the number-one pound-for-pound fighter in five years?_____

WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of October 1998, the WBC as of November 1998, and the IBF as of November 1998.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Lennox Lewis (GB)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Evander Holyfield (USA)	**–**	**C**	**C**
John Ruiz (USA)	1	2	4
Zeljko Mavrovic (CROA)	2	8	–
Ray Mercer (USA)	3	7	5
David Tua (NZ)	4	–	10
Wladimir Klitchko (UKR)	5	–	–
Michael Grant (USA)	6	6	–
Andrew Golota (POL)	7	–	–
Vitali Klitchko (UKR)	8	–	–
Larry Donald (USA)	9	12	7
Axel Schulz (GER)	10	–	–
Henry Akinwande (GB)	–	1	6
Jade Scott (USA)	22	3	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	4	12
Mike Tyson (USA)	–	5	–
Oleg Maskaev (UKR)	20	9	–
Michael Moorer (USA)	–	10	11
Vacant	–	–	1
Francois Botha (SA)	21	–	2
Hasim Rahman (USA)	24	–	3
Vaughn Bean (USA)	–	11	8
Chris Byrd (USA)	12	–	9

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Arthur Williams (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	1	–	12
Dale Brown (CAN)	2	10	–
Johnny Nelson (GB)	3	–	–
Darren Corbett (IRE)	4	3	5
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	5	9	8
Ken Murphy (USA)	6	5	4
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	7	–	–
Saul Montana (MEX)	8	2	–
Alexei Ilin (RUS)	9	–	–
George Ariss (BRA)	10	–	–
Ezequiel Paixao (BRA)	–	1	–
Robert Daniels (USA)	17	4	–
Nate Miller (USA)	–	6	–
Stefan Anghern (SWI)	–	7	–
Valery Vikhor (LAT)	21	8	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Stefan Anghem (SWI)	–	–	3
Imamu Mayfield (USA)	–	11	6
Ramon Garbey (CUB)	13	–	7
Terry Dunstan (GB)	–	–	9
Uriah Grant (USA)	–	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	**C**	**C**	**–**
Reggie Johnson (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Richard Frazier (USA)	1	3	6
Montell Griffin (USA)	2	8	12
Derrick Harmon (USA)	3	11	11
Michael Nunn (USA)	4	–	–
Crawford Ashley (GB)	5	4	2
Henry Wharton (GB)	6	–	–
Lou Del Valle (USA)	7	6	5
Hisashi Teraji (JAP)	8	–	–
Jorge Castro (ARG)	9	–	–
Otis Grant (USA)	10	–	–
Dario Matteoni (ARG)	26	1	–
Richard Hall (USA)	22	2	4
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	5	–
Anthony Bigeni (AUS)	–	7	–
David Telesco (USA)	13	9	7
Fabian Chancelay (ARG)	11	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Will Taylor (USA)	19	–	3
Antonio Tarver (USA)	23	–	8
Mark Prince (GB)	–	–	9
Muhammad Siluvangi (ZAI)	12	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Richie Woodhall (GB)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Frank Liles (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Sven Ottke (GER)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Vincenzo Nardiello (ITA)	1	–	11
Glenn Catley (GB)	2	–	–
Eric Lucas (CAN)	3	5	–
Dean Francis (GB)	4	–	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	5	3	1
Robin Reid (GB)	6	12	8
Zafarou Ballogou (TOGO)	7	10	4
Bruno Girard (FRA)	8	1	–
David Starie (GB)	9	8	9
Chris Johnson (CAN)	10	11	–
Byron Mitchell (USA)	12	2	3
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	4	–
Herol Graham (GB)	–	6	–
Mads Larsen (DEN)	16	7	–
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	–	9	10
Charles Brewer (USA)	–	–	2
Rick Thornberry (AUST)	27	–	5
Antoine Byrd (USA)	–	–	6
Dean Francis (GB)	–	–	7

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
William Joppy (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Stephane Ouelette (CAN)	1	9	–
Robert McCracken (GB)	2	7	3
Antwun Echols (USA)	3	–	–
Winky Wright (USA)	4	5	–
Keith Holmes (USA)	5	4	7
Kevin Palmer (USA)	6	–	–
Bert Schenk (GER)	7	–	–
Julio Cesar Vazquez (ARG)	8	–	–
Giovanni Pretorius (SA)	9	8	4
Ali Ennebati (FRA)	10	12	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	1	–
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	12	2	6
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	3	–
Rito Ruvalcaba (MEX)	22	6	–
Agostino Cardamone (ITA)	–	10	8
Robert Allen (USA)	–	–	1
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	–	2
Anthony Andrews (GUY)	27	–	5
Peter Venancio (BRA)	–	–	9
Michael Ward (USA)	–	–	10

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Keith Mullings (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Laurent Boudouani (FRA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Yori Boy Campas (MEX)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Javier Castillejo (SPA)	1	7	10
Tony Marshall (USA)	2	3	–
David Reid (USA)	3	6	8
Davide Ciarlante (ITA)	4	–	–
Kookyui Song (KOR)	5	–	–
Said Bennajem (FRA)	6	–	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	7	4	–
Raul Marquez (USA)	8	–	6
James Coker (USA)	9	–	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	10	2	–
Guillermo Jones (PAN)	–	1	–
Emmett Linton (USA)	–	5	9
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	8	–
Hector Camacho (PR)	–	9	–
Pedro Ortega (MEX)	–	10	–
Fernando Vargas (USA)	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Earnie Artango (AUSTRL)	28	–	3
Andrew Murray (GUY)	–	–	4
Aaron Davis (USA)	–	–	5
Carl Daniels (USA)	–	–	7

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
James Page (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Felix Trinidad (PR)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Derrell Coley (USA)	1	4	5
Ike Quartey (GHA)	2	3	–
Jose Luis Lopez (MEX)	3	1	10
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	4	6	11
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	5	–	–
Wilfredo Rivera (PR)	6	9	–
Maxim Nesterenko (RUS)	7	7	–
Vernon Forrest (USA)	8	–	4
Oba Carr (USA)	9	2	8
Frankie Randall (USA)	10	–	–
Frank Olsen (DEN)	16	5	–
Andrei Pestraiev (RUS)	–	8	–
Jeff Malcolm (AUSTRL)	–	10	–
Vincent Pettway (USA)	–	–	1
Hugo Pineda (COL)	–	–	2
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	3
Mahenge Zulu (ZAI)	–	–	6
Sam Garr (GA)	–	–	7
Antonio Marqurito (MEX)	–	–	9

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	**C**	**–**	**–**
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vince Phillips (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)	1	7	–
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	2	1	5
Julio Cesar Chavez (MEX)	3	8	–
Reggie Green (USA)	4	10	6
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	5	–	–
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	6	–	–
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	7	–	–
Rafael Ruelas (MEX)	8	–	–
Ismael Chaves (ARG)	9	–	–
Mauro Lucero (MEX)	10	–	–
Virgil McClendon (USA)	–	2	3
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	11	3	–
Elio Ortiz (VEN)	–	4	–
Juan Coggi (ARG)	–	5	12
Freddy Rojas (CHILE)	20	6	4
Zab Judah (USA)	19	9	2
Terron Millett (USA)	–	–	1
Randall Bailey (USA)	–	–	7
Emanuel Burton (USA)	21	–	8
Alex Carillo (COL)	–	–	9
Hector Lopez (MEX)	15	–	10

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Jean-Baptiste Mendy (FRA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Shane Mosley (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Billy Schwer (GB)	1	4	9
Steve Johnston (USA)	2	–	10
Daomai Sithkodam (THAI)	3	–	–
Genaro Hernandez (USA)	4	–	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	5	–	–
Hiroyuki Sakamoto (JAP)	6	–	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	7	7	–
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	8	–	–
Aldo Rios (ARG)	9	–	–
Israel Cardona (USA)	10	5	1
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	–	1	–
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	–	2	–
Orzubek Nazarov (JAP)	–	3	–
Phillip Holiday (SA)	–	6	3
Eduardo Morales (ARG)	–	8	6
Angel Manfredy (USA)	–	9	–
Ivan Robinson (USA)	16	10	2
Justin Rowsell (AUSTRL)	–	–	4
Leavander Johnson (USA)	–	–	5
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	–	7
Ben Tackie (GHA)	21	–	8

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Robert Garcia (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	–	–
Goyo Vargas (MEX)	2	–	–
Justin Juuko (UGA)	3	2	6
Santos Rebolledo (VEN)	4	–	10
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	5	–	–
Gabriel Ruelas (MEX)	6	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	7	10	–
Saul Duran (MEX)	8	–	–
Jorge Barrios (ARG)	9	–	–
Angel Manfredy (USA)	10	–	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	1	–
Yong Soo Choi (KOR)	–	3	–
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	16	4	–
Edson Xuxa Nacimento (BRA)	–	5	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	6	–
Antonio Hernandez (MEX)	–	7	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	8	–
Carlos Gerena (PR)	12	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	11	–	3
Arnulfo Castillo (USA)	–	–	4
Harold Warren (USA)	–	–	5
Ramon Ledon (CUBA)	–	–	7
Diego Corrales (USA)	–	–	8
Moises Pedroza (COL)	–	–	9

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Luisito Espinosa (PHIL)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Manuel Medina (MEX)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Cesar Soto (MEX)	1	1	9
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	2	12	–
Paul Ingle (GB)	3	6	4
Derrick Gainer (USA)	4	–	–
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	5	10	–
Takeo Imaoka (JAP)	6	–	–
Injin Chi (KOR)	7	–	–
Carlos Rios (ARG)	8	–	–
Hector Valaquez (MEX)	9	–	–
Dramane Nabaloun (BKF)	10	–	–
Fred Norwood (USA)	–	2	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	3	1
Frederic Perez (FRA)	–	4	–
Chamopekt Chorchamuang (THAI)	–	5	–
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	7	3
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	8	2
Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)	–	9	–
Jesus Chavez (USA)	–	–	5
Hector Lizarraga (USA)	–	–	6
Steve Robinson (GB)	18	–	7
Tony Wehbee (AUS)	20	–	8
Teofilo Carranza (PER)	–	–	10

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vuyani Bungu (SA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Reynante Jamili (PHIL)	1	11	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	2	8	–
Michael Brodie (GB)	3	5	3
Ariston Clayton (USA)	4	–	9
Jesus Salud (USA)	5	–	–
Kozo Ishii (JAP)	6	–	–
Sergei Devakov (UKR)	7	–	8
Kennedy McKinney (USA)	8	–	–
Sergio Aguila (MEX)	9	–	–
Angel Chacon (PR)	10	–	–
John Johnson (USA)	–	1	4
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	–	2	–
Richard Carrillo (VEN)	–	3	–
Hector Acero-Sanchez (DR)	–	4	–
Bugiarso (INDO)	–	6	–
Serge Poilblan (FRA)	–	7	–
Rafael Del Valle (PR)	–	9	–
Choe Chol Su (KOR)	–	10	–
Victor Llerena (COL)	–	–	1
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	11	12	2
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	5
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	17	–	6
Anell Barotillo (AUSTRL)	22	–	7
Jose Mendoza (COL)	–	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Nana Konadu (GHA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Tim Austin (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Adan Vargas (MEX)	1	6	9
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	2	–	–
Paul Ayala (USA)	3	3	–
Gerardo Martinez (MEX)	4	5	–
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	5	–	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	6	8	–
John Michael Johnson (USA)	7	–	–
Oscar Garro (ARG)	8	12	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	9	–	–
Jess Maca (PHIL)	10	–	–
Lukhin CP Gym (THAI)	–	1	–
Sahoiu Phaisarn Gym (THA)	–	2	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	16	4	–
Giovanni Andrade (BRA)	–	7	–
Kozo Ishii (KOR)	–	9	–
Johnny Armour (GB)	–	10	4
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Jesus Perez (COL)	23	–	3
Adrian Kaspari (INDO)	–	–	5
Albert Resilay (INDO)	–	–	6
Bernardo Mendoza (CHI)	–	–	7
Jorge Otero (COL)	30	–	8
Cesar Singo (ECU)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
In Joo Cho (KOR)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Satoshi Iida (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Johnny Tapia (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	–	12
Luis Bolanos (COL)	2	12	–
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	3	4	–
Raffy Montalban (PHIL)	4	–	–
Ratanachai Sor Voraphin (THAI)	5	11	2
Akihigo Nago (JAP)	6	10	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	7	1	–
Jose Rafael Sosa (ARG)	8	–	–
Pone Saengmorokot (THAI)	9	–	–
Keiji Yamaguchi (JAP)	10	–	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	–
Veeraphol Sahaprom (THAI)	–	3	–
Julio Gamboa (NIC)	–	5	8
Dario Azuaga (PAR)	–	6	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	7	–
Felix Machado (VEN)	–	8	11
Takato Toguchi (JAP)	15	9	–
Ernesto Briceno (VEN)	–	–	1
Eric Morel (USA)	11	–	3
Pedro Pena (USA)	23	–	4
David Vinger (SA)	–	–	5
Joel Luna Zarate (MEX)	–	–	6
Sombak Singchawan (THAI)	–	–	7
Ubadel Soto (COL)	–	–	9
Evangelo Perez (PAN)	–	–	10

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Hugo Soto (ARG)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Mark Johnson (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Gabriel Mira (MEX)	1	–	–
David Guerault (FRA)	2	5	1
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	3	–	–
Oscar Arciniega (MEX)	4	–	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	5	8	–
Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)	6	2	–
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	7	–	–
Will Grigsby (USA)	8	7	–
Alfonso Zvenyika (ZIM)	9	–	–
Raul Juarez (MEX)	10	–	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	1	–
Jose Bonilla (VEN)	–	3	–
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	4	–
Jesper Jensen (DEN)	–	6	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	9	–
Miguel A. Granados (MEX)	15	10	–
Irene Pacheco (COL)	–	–	2
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	11	3
Yodchingchai Sornthong (THAI)	–	–	4
Yuri Arbachakov (RUS)	–	–	5
Mike Trejo (USA)	14	–	6
Jose Landin (USA)	–	–	7
Pedro Alcazar (PAN)	–	–	8
Luis Cox (PER)	–	–	9
Angel Priolo (COL)	–	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Vacant	**–**	**–**	**C**
Yosam Choi (KOR)	1	10	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	2	1	1
Oscar Andrade (MEX)	3	4	–
Phanieng Sasiprabha (THAI)	4	–	–
Edgar Cardenas (MEX)	5	–	–
Gabriel Munoz (MEX)	6	–	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	7	5	–
Ladislao Vazquez (MEX)	8	–	–
Sangik Yang (KOR)	9	–	–
Shiro Yahiro (JAP)	10	–	–
Oswaldo Guerrero (MEX)	–	2	6
Mednogn 3K Battery (THAI)	20	3	–
Carlos Murillo (PAN)	–	6	7
Hadao C.P. Gym (THAI)	–	7	–
Pongsaklek Nakornton (THAI)	–	8	–
Panieng Pontarat (THAI)	–	9	–
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin (THAI)	–	–	2
Will Grigsby (USA)	–	–	3
Gill Ikeda (JAP)	–	–	4
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	5
Jose Sanjuanelo (COL)	–	–	8
Pedro Rodriguez (COL)	–	–	9
Manuel Jesus Herrera (DR)	13	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Zolani Petelo (SA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	1	12	–
Andy Tabanas (PHIL)	2	10	2
Daniel Reyes (COL)	3	11	3
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	4	–	–
Luis Lazarte (ARG)	5	–	1
Satoru Abe (JAP)	6	5	–
Ratanapol Sow Voraphin (THAI)	7	–	–
Myung Sup Park (KOR)	8	8	–
Jun Arlos (PHIL)	9	–	–
Lakchai Dechakul (THAI)	10	–	–
Songkram Porpaoin (THAI)	–	1	–
Ronnie Magramo (PHIL)	–	2	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	3	–
Rocky Lin (JAP)	–	4	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	–	6	–
Payak Nakornluang (THAI)	11	7	–
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	–	9	–
Eric Jamili (PHIL)	–	–	4
Mickey Cantwell (GB)	–	–	5
Faisol Akbar (INDO)	–	–	6
Rocky Palma (JAP)	–	–	7
Jose Laureano (PR)	–	–	8
Mongol Chareon (THAI)	–	–	9
Denkaosan Kaowichit (THAI)	–	–	10

RING CLASSIC

PACKEY McFARLAND

THE MASTER SCIENTIST

By George T. Pardy

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version)

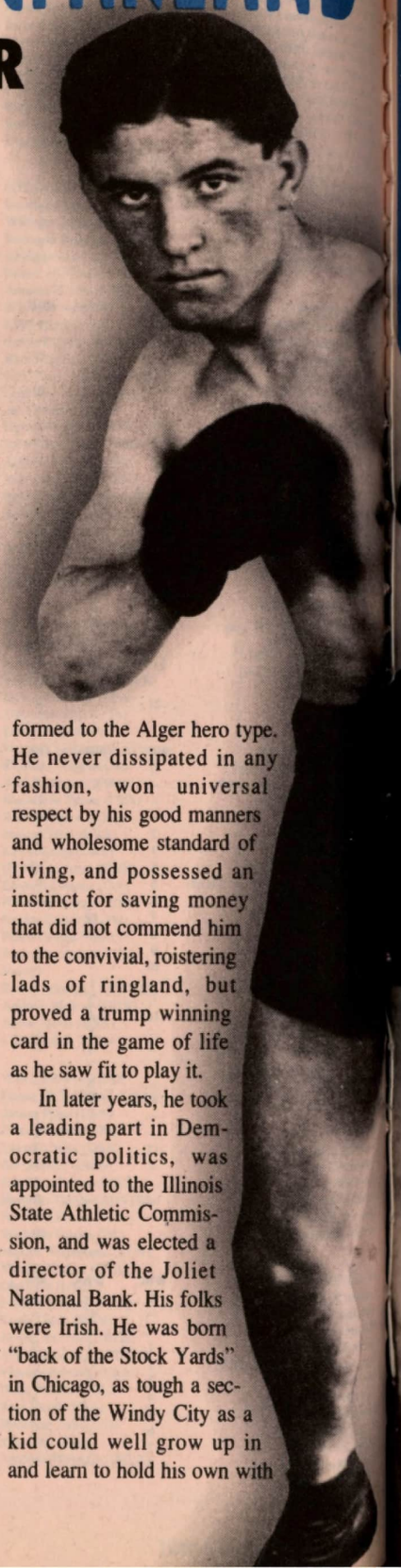
One of the ring's most notable scientists of an earlier generation passed away when Packey McFarland died at his home in Joliet, Illinois, last month. He was also one of the most successful from a financial standpoint for his day, as he retired in 1915 worth about $300,000. This did not all accrue to him from fight earnings. Purses had not attained their present imposing value when McFarland's educated left hand played hob with members of the lightweight class. Yet he was easily a top-notch moneymaker as a box office attraction.

One purse of $4,000 he invested in an oil speculation on the Pacific Coast brought him back golden returns that were reinvested in real estate, and his bank account grew to a still greater figure. And so it went! McFarland's luck stood by him out of the ring, as it did when he worked between the ropes.

His business interests always prospered. He made a good marriage that turned out happily. A wife, a 20-year-old son, and three daughters survive him and were present when he died from a heart ailment in his 47th year. In fact, McFarland's career may be said to have included many of the elements that go to the making of a Horatio Alger success story.

Alger never did choose a pugilist as hero for one of his juvenile romances. Boxers of the Alger era had not attained the social recognition some of them enjoy today. The ancient plug-ugly legend still adhered to the ring denizens and their profession.

But in many respects, McFarland conformed to the Alger hero type. He never dissipated in any fashion, won universal respect by his good manners and wholesome standard of living, and possessed an instinct for saving money that did not commend him to the convivial, roistering lads of ringland, but proved a trump winning card in the game of life as he saw fit to play it.



In later years, he took a leading part in Democratic politics, was appointed to the Illinois State Athletic Commission, and was elected a director of the Joliet National Bank. His folks were Irish. He was born "back of the Stock Yards" in Chicago, as tough a section of the Windy City as a kid could well grow up in and learn to hold his own with fists and feet, as demanded by the rough strategy of street-scrapping.

This McFarland did perforce, although on the whole of a peaceable turn of mind. But under such conditions a small boy had to smite back when smitten, and smite first if possible, or be eternally disgraced around the bailiwick. So McFarland smote, and smote successfully when the spirit so moved him, and won rating as a good lad with his hands quite early in life.

At 16, he went to work in a boiler shop, a trade at which James J. Jeffries also labored in his salad days. Now and again at the noon hour, the gloves furnished a bit of sport for the plant employees, and, as might be supposed, it was boxing of a pretty strenuous order. McFarland took to the sport as a duck to water. A knockout victory scored by him in the yard over a colored husky named Fox turned his mind definitely toward pugilism as a means of earning a livelihood.

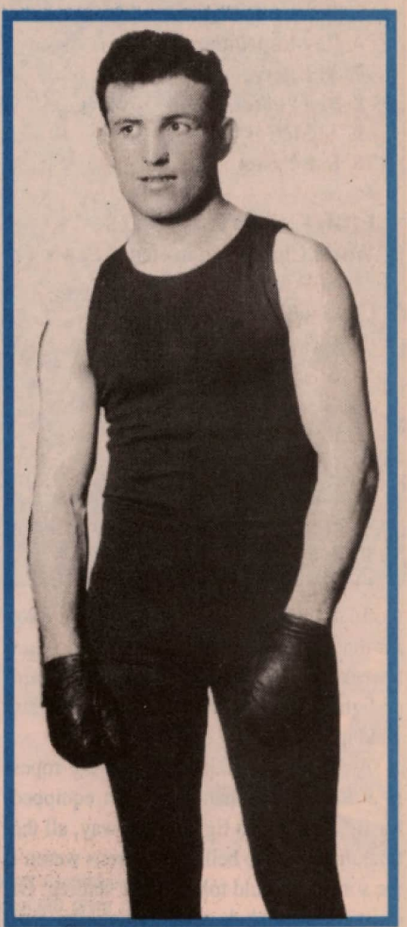
McFarland remained active in sports after his retirement from the ring. Here, McFarland is greeted by fighters he faced (from left to right) Jimmy Britt, Willie Richie, Jack Hogan, Tim McGrath, and Johnny McCarthy at a CYO function in San Francisco in 1934.

Packey McFarland as he looked in his prime. McFarland could have been the hero of some Horatio Alger story, since he became a success in the ring as well as out of it before dying of heart failure in September 1936.

It was no easy matter at that. For McFarland's folks had no enthusiasm to waste on the notion of a fighting career for their black-haired, agile-footed, handsome offspring. He had to come home at a regular time each evening and let them think he was still hammering away in the boilerworks, whereas it was quite a different sort of hammering that he was practicing around the gymnasium run by Harry Gilmore, veteran ex-lightweight.

The hitch came when there was no pay envelope forthcoming. The fighting game, so far as novices were concerned, wasn't declaring any big dividends then, and McFarland had finally to confess he had lost his job. But he didn't go looking for another one. Instead he managed to wangle a fight with Pete West, whom he knocked out in two rounds, receiving three dollars reward for his exertions, half of which went to the chap who got him the bout.

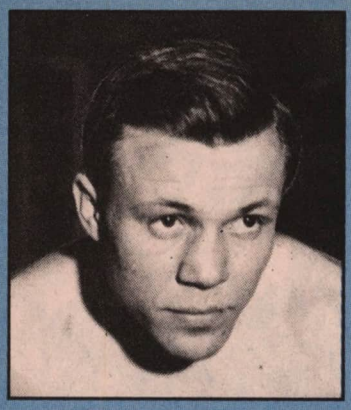
That was in 1904. Any youngster who once showed that he could punch a bit was pretty sure of being kept busy slinging mitts in the "back of the Yards" section. Handball courts were plentiful there, for



McFarland was instinctively a boxer. Early in his career, however, McFarland's patrons demanded action, and that's what he had to give them.

From THE RING, December 1936

THE RING RATINGS, December 1936



Lou Ambers

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Jimmy Braddock
1. Max Schmeling
2. Joe Louis
3. Maxie Rosenbloom
4. Jack Trammell
5. Tommy Loughran
6. Ray Impellitiere
7. Al Ettore
8. Ben Foord
9. Al McCoy
10. Bob Pastor

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: John Henry Lewis
1. Al Gainer
2. Leo Kelly
3. Jock McAvoy
4. Gus Lesnevich
5. Carmen Barth
6. Ray Actis
7. Fred Lenhart
8. Dave Clark
9. Steve Carr
10. Joey Parks

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Marcel Thil
1. Freddie Steele
2. Fred Apostoli
3. Ken Overlin
4. Lou Brouillard
5. Solly Krieger
6. Oscar Rankins
7. Erich Seelig
8. Young Corbett
9. Teddy Yarosz
10. Harry Balsamo

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Barney Ross
1. Jack Carroll
2. Jimmy McLarnin
3. Ceferino Garcia
4. Izzy Jannazzo
5. Cleto Locatelli
6. Fritzie Zivic
7. Cocoa Kid
8. Jack Portney
9. Gustave Eder
10. Jimmy Leto

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Lou Ambers
1. Tony Canzoneri
2. Pedro Montanez
3. Enrico Venturi
4. Laurie Stevens
5. Chino Alvarez
6. Indian Hurtado
7. Aldo Spoldi
8. Wesley Ramey
9. Howard Scott
10. Joey Alcanter

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Petey Sarron
1. Henry Armstrong
2. Mike Belloise
3. Freddie Miller
4. Baby Arizmendi
5. Dick Corbett
6. Johnny McGrory
7. Nel Tarleton
8. Tony Chavez
9. Fillo Echeverria
10. Benny Sharkey

BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Sixto Escobar
1. Indian Quintana
2. Frankie Martin
3. Tony Marino
4. Lou Salica
5. K.O. Morgan
6. Baltasar Sangchili
7. Johnny King
8. Henry Hooks
9. Pancho Leyvas
10. Jackie Brown

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Vacant
1. Jim Warnock
2. Benny Lynch
3. Small Montana
4. Peter Kane
5. Valentin Anglemann
6. Maurice Huguenin
7. Katsuma Morioka
8. Enrico Urbinati
9. Phil Milligan
10. Syd Parker

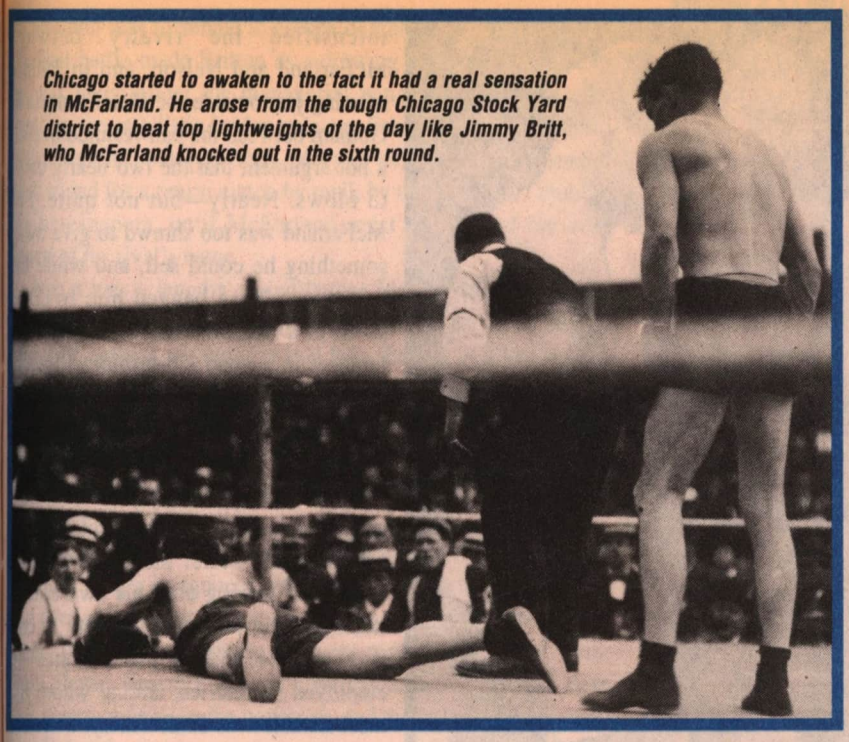
the Irish mustered strong and went in a lot for that particular game. And several times a week this court or that announced a card of fights, with four-round prelims and six windup.

Anybody who ducked under the ropes in a Stock Yards handball court equipped for fighting had to fight all the way, all the time, from bell to bell. The patrons weren't the sort that would tolerate any stalling. Or quitting either! A man that really quit under fire was in a bad spot, the chances being that he would be worse beaten up outside the ring than inside it.

It was in this rough school that McFarland made his early bids for fame and attained widespread popularity among the Yards' sporting contingent. Most of his fighting was done for the first couple of years around the Yards, and a glance at his record shows it thickly studded with quick knockouts. That was because the customers wanted hard punching and swift results.

Instinctively, McFarland was a boxer. He could hit when necessary, but had he followed his instinct from the beginning, he would have boxed rather than slugged with all opponents. In later years, when he became a big drawing card, he relied almost entirely on his speed, science, and generalship to win, and could seldom be coaxed into a punch-for-punch exchange.

His is not the only example of a scientist who traded wallops freely in the early stages of a milling career. Take the case of Abe Attell, one of the greatest of the featherweight champions in point of cleverness. Attell's first two years of active ring ser-



Chicago started to awaken to the fact it had a real sensation in McFarland. He arose from the tough Chicago Stock Yard district to beat top lightweights of the day like Jimmy Britt, who McFarland knocked out in the sixth round.

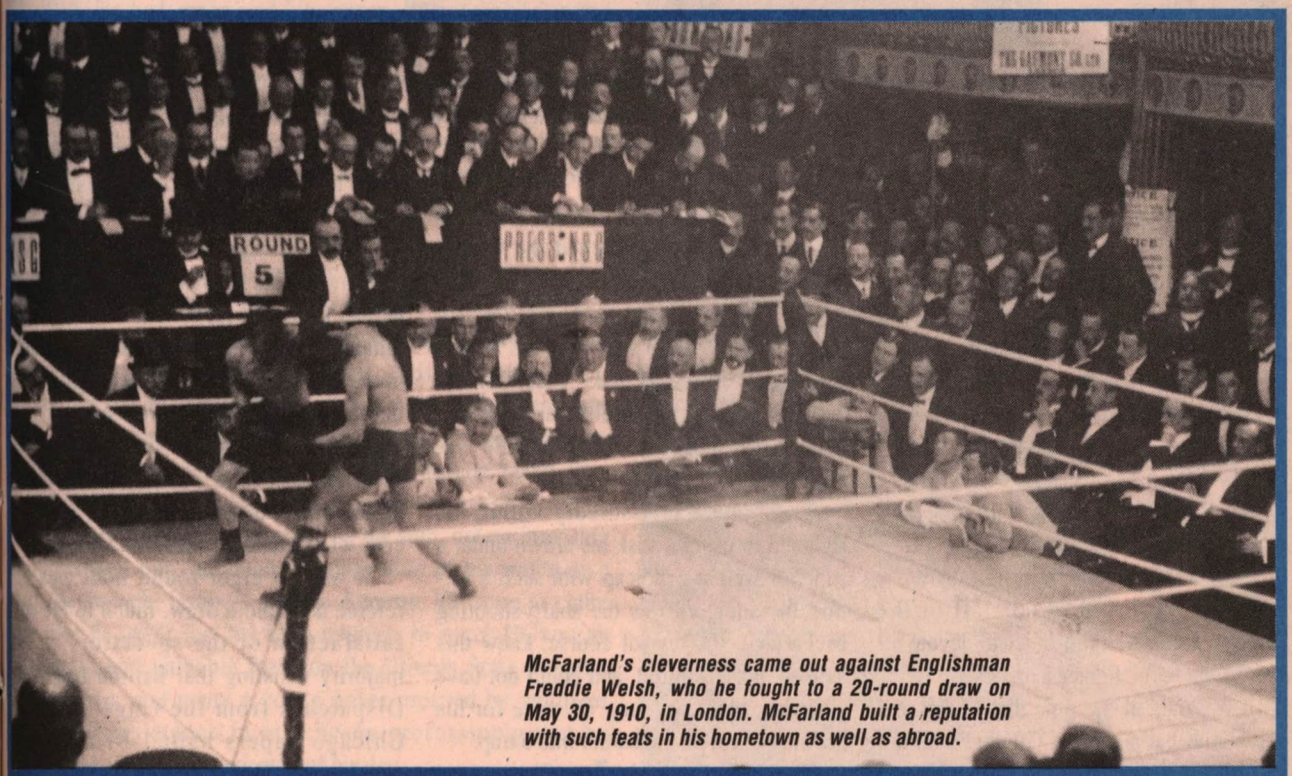
vice were crammed with knockouts administered in jig-time. In later years when he was famous as a wizard of sparring skill, few people knew that he carried a kayo wallop, nor did he try to demonstrate the fact. Like McFarland, he had grown wiser with the passage of time, and would not take unnecessarily dangerous chances.

McFarland, however, had scant choice in the matter at the beginning of things. His patrons demanded strenuous action, and he had to give it to them. It was thus that he suffered the only two defeats of his long and spectacular ring record. In the many accounts published by the metropolitan press of McFarland's demise and his career, a majority referred to him as the "uncrowned champion of the lightweights," and the "boxer who never lost a battle"!

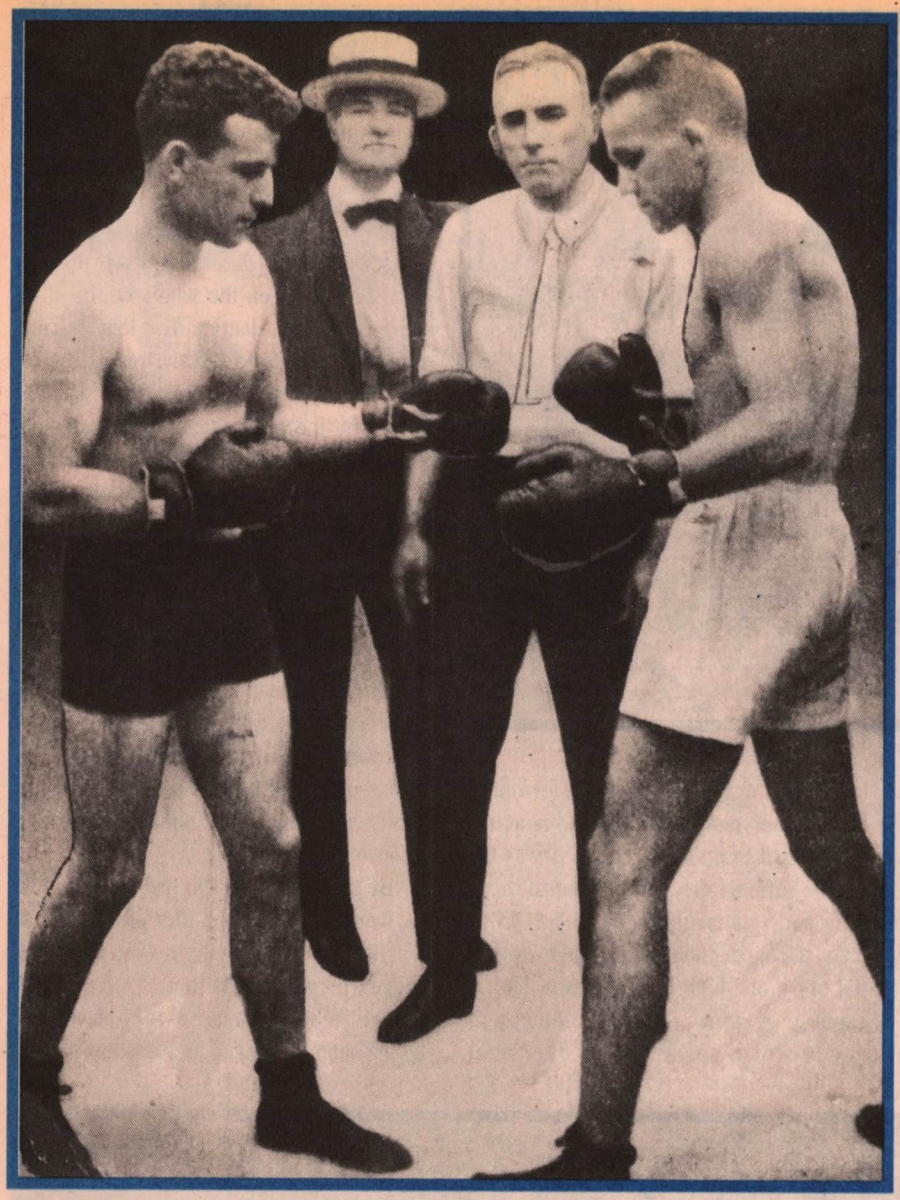
McFarland had to fight a good many times outside of his native burg before Chicago sports in general awoke to the fact that the Windy City had produced a real sensation in the line of fisticuffs. The reason for this odd state of things was that his local fame was on the whole confined to the Stock Yards district. The long boxing shutdown that followed the revelation of the McGovern-Gans fake, and drastic action by the authorities, had eliminated the clubs, and when the game started up again it was in a cheap and uncertain way.

The East was yet to become aware of McFarland's wonderful abilities, but he was a familiar and appreciated ring principal in such cities as Milwaukee, Davenport, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, etc. His initial ring appearance in the East was in Boston with Bert Keyes in 1908. He handled Keyes with the cold indifference of a professor giving a pupil a lesson, and the sportswriters acclaimed him as a marvel of science and speed.

By this time, Chicago had awakened to the knowledge that, besides providing the world with a lightweight champ in the rugged person of Battling Nelson, it had also given birth to a rara avis of cleverness by the name of Packey McFarland.



McFarland's cleverness came out against Englishman Freddie Welsh, who he fought to a 20-round draw on May 30, 1910, in London. McFarland built a reputation with such feats in his hometown as well as abroad.



McFarland renounced his retirement for an exceptionally big purse to tackle middleweight Mike Gibbons. The fans expected fireworks, but the two instead treated them to 10 rounds of dancing.

A knockout of Jimmy Britt; a decision over, and 25-round draw with Freddy Welsh; no-decision bouts with such Eastern cracks as Young Loughrey, Leach Cross, Tommy Murphy. Such feats naturally invested McFarland with a reputation second to none in his class, and his hometown honored him accordingly.

His first manager was young Harry Gilmore, son of the veteran lightweight, whose enthusiasm for McFarland's prowess was such that he resigned from a good job on the editorial staff of the *Chicago Daily News* in order to devote all of his time to the fighter's interests.

It was said at the time that McFarland was somewhat peeved at Gilmore's failure to get him a match with Battling Nelson for the lightweight title. But the truth was that McFarland had reached the weight stage at which he could not train down to the 133 ringside, and have the strength enough left to whip a sparrow. And Nelson resolutely refused to make exception for McFarland or anyone else, as regarded making 133 pounds, where the title was concerned.

The Dane was assuredly within his rights in refusing to risk his crown under a superior weight handicap with such a formidable antagonist as the sharp-shooting McFarland. Packey, of course, knew this as well as Nelson did, and could not have sincerely blamed young Gilmore for his inability to cajole the battler into a trap.

The fact that both were Chicagoans intensified the rivalry between McFarland and Nelson, and in 1908 a meeting just outside the Hotel Astoria in Gotham between the pair resulted in such a hot argument that the two nearly came to blows. Nearly—but not quite. For McFarland was too shrewd to give away something he could sell, and while the impetuous Dane begged him to come down in a basement and settle their differences in a good old-fashioned knock-down-and-dragout shindy, the boxer with the business head only grinned scornfully at the suggestion.

In dropping Gilmore from the managerial role, McFarland was solely influenced by the belief that he was quite capable of looking after his own affairs, without the unwelcome necessity of cutting profits with a pilot. Later he employed secretaries, among whom the most notable was Emil Thiery, a former wrestler, to help in the conduct of his matchmaking. But the last word was always McFarland's when it came to signing articles. The profit-cutting method was out definitely.

After his 20-round victory over Tommy Murphy, a Memphis, Tennessee, club offered McFarland a 10-round bout with Jack Britton, which McFarland accepted. Britton began fighting in 1904, the same year that McFarland made his professional debut. Britton had been to the post 126 times, against McFarland's list of 70 battles. The former had beaten a lot of good men, but most of these were not of the first rank, whereas McFarland had been performing in top-notch company.

Yet those who knew Britton intimately were aware that he was real class, although he had been less lucky than McFarland in obtaining important matches. McFarland, however, held Britton rather lightly and did not anticipate much trouble in disposing of Britton's pretensions in Memphis. Instead, he found a formidable foe of undeniable boxing cleverness and ring craft who extended him to the utmost.

It was an eight-round bout and the referee declared a draw, much to the dissatisfaction of the spectators, a big majority insisting that Britton had won. Dispatches from the ringside to the Chicago papers hailed Britton as a coming champion, and asserted that

McFarland was fortunate to escape defeat.

That battle made Britton as a drawing card, and later, when he was taken under the managerial wing of Dan Morgan, he went up the pugilistic ladder in leaps, finally winning the world welterweight championship. Morgan persistently challenged McFarland for a return match by mail, by telegraph, and through the newspapers, until McFarland must have hated the very sound of his rival's name.

But it was a lengthy period before McFarland consented to meet Britton again. Not that McFarland feared the issue, he was afraid of nothing walking on two legs. But he believed he had been taken advantage of in the Memphis business, where he thought he should have been declared winner. It was really in the spirit of standing up for his rights, and not acknowledging what he considered an absurd claim, that he gave Morgan and his charge the cold shoulder.

Eventually there arose a public demand for the match that could no longer be ignored, with the result that in 1913, Britton and McFarland went 10 rounds under no-decision rules in New York. It was good fighting in every sense of the word. Both were clever, superbly so, and a bit cautious as well, but there was plenty of force to the punching, and the onlookers were well satisfied at the finish.

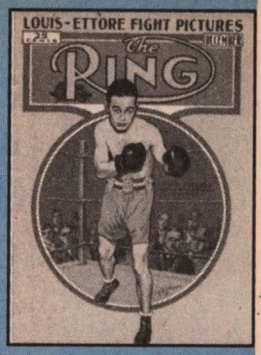
It was a hard scrap to call a winner in. Opinions among the ringsiders were pretty evenly divided. The newspaper verdicts showed a slight majority for McFarland, but on the whole it could have been listed a 50-50 break without making an error. As a matter of fact, the question of superiority between this notable pair was never actually settled. A third meeting in Milwaukee, also a no-decision affair, was no more decisive than the Gotham encounter.

After the final meeting with Britton, which took place December 8, 1913, McFarland remained idle until September 11, 1915. He had announced his retirement, but yielded to the inducement of an exceptionally big purse to tackle Mike Gibbons for 10 rounds before a New York club. Gibbons was a middleweight, and the most scientific of the class at that date. In fact, "The St. Paul Phantom," as the sports writers christened him, was a veritable marvel of cleverness, and the fans looked forward to a genuine treat in fighting fireworks when he and McFarland answered the clang of the gong.

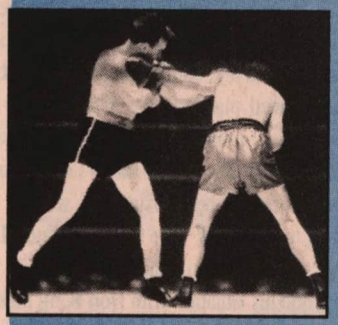
But, as has frequently happened when two first-chop scientists get together, there was no excitement whatsoever. Both were equipped with a knockout punch, and each feared the other might get home on the fateful point. Neither would take a chance. So the much-touted fray turned out to be a disappointment, for the principals tapped and lightly footed their way through the 10 rounds without the slightest damage being done on either side.

That was McFarland's farewell to the ring, not an imposing or sensational one, although demonstrative of his superlative skill. Henceforth, business and the domestic life were to claim him. But he never lost his keen interests in sport. He was an intelligent and valuable force on the Illinois State Athletic Commission, and many a young boxer profited by words of cheer and assistance in his chosen profession given by McFarland, master ring scientist of his day. ■

THE RING, December 1936



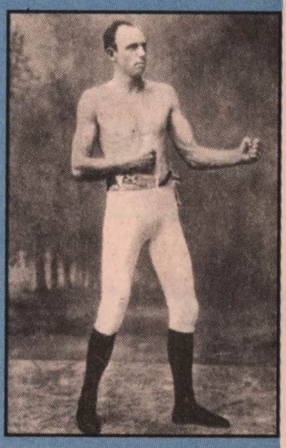
The Cover: World bantamweight champion Sixto Escobar earned a spot on the cover by wresting the title from Tony Marino with a 13th-round kayo in August of '36. The Puerto Rican would go on to lose the title to Harry Jeffra in his first defense, but he became a two-time champion by winning the rematch in '38.



Canzoneri's Last Stand: THE RING was there as former lightweight king Tony Canzoneri took a 10-round pounding from former welterweight champ Jimmy McLarnin in front of 12,000 at Madison Square Garden. Canzoneri, 27, was a shopworn fighter trying to avenge an earlier loss to McLarnin.

Easy Come, Easy Go: THE RING caught up with a handful of former champions who squandered their ring earnings. Former lightweight champ Benny Leonard lost most of his money when the stock market crashed in 1929. He recouped some of those lost earnings by making an ill-fated comeback.

Playboy Of The Ring: The life and times of former light heavyweight champion Maxie Rosenbloom are examined. Though he held the title from June 25, 1930, to November 16, 1934, Rosenbloom was popular on the night-club circuit—and still won.



Fitz Stewed: THE RING recalled a story explaining why Bob Fitzsimmons lost the heavyweight title against Jim Jeffries. A family squabble 72 hours before the title fight enraged Fitzsimmons, and he angrily tossed a bowl of his wife's famous lamb stew. Fitz' nerves were stewed when he stepped into the ring against Jeffries, and he left without the title.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

ASSUMING OSCAR GETS BY QUARTEY ...

Thanks to an injured wrist and a cut eyelid, 1998 wasn't quite everything **Oscar De La Hoya** had envisioned. Sure, knocking out **Patrick Charpentier** in front of 45,000 screaming fans was nice, and silencing **Julio Cesar Chavez'** whining once and for all had to be satisfying. But two fights does not a golden year make, especially when there are so many great challenges available in today's welterweight division.

De La Hoya: Four fights in '99

Well, if De La Hoya can steer clear of the injury bug in '99, his promoters are looking to make up for the opportunities he missed out on last year. Of course, the WBC welter champ will kick things off on February 13 by risking it all against **Ike Quartey**, but the people at **Top Rank** have such confidence in their "Golden Boy," they've got the rest of his year pretty well planned out. A supporting bout on the De La Hoya-Quartey show pits **Oba Carr** against **Frankie Randall** in a 12-round eliminator, with the winner to meet De La Hoya on HBO in May or June, perhaps from the new 12,000-seat Mandalay Bay arena in Las Vegas.

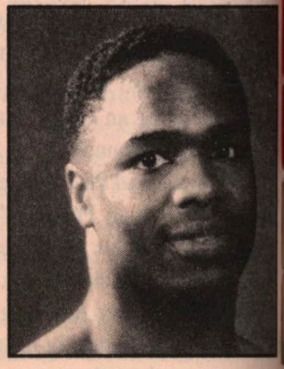
Then, in September, boxing fans may be treated to the big one: De La Hoya vs. **Felix Trinidad**. It's no sure thing, according to Top Rank Vice President **Todd DuBoef**, but it's the matchup they're shooting for.

"We would love Trinidad," DuBoef said, "but we don't know availability. Trinidad's not doing himself any good not fighting, and his situation with **Don King** makes it hard to guarantee anything. But that's the fight we want."

And if De La Hoya beats both Quartey *and* Trinidad, he doesn't plan on stopping there. A December fight is also planned, and it may be De La Hoya's long-awaited move up to 154 pounds. He has his eye on the WBC belt, which gives **Keith Mullings** plenty of incentive to hold on to that title until then.

FREE BYRD READY TO GET BUSY

Main Events announced in November that four boxers had been eliminated from its stable for an assortment of reasons. Welterweight **Derrell Coley** was released, according to a Main Events press release, because the promotional company "grew weary of Coley turning down bouts offered to him." Team Freedom prospects **Joel Casamayor** and **Ramon Garbey** were let go because of what Main Events labeled "disappointment with the progress of the two boxers." And, finally, Main Events claims it declined to pick up the option on **Chris Byrd** when the undefeated heavyweight's contract expired.



Byrd: Flown Main Events' coop

"That's not true at all," Byrd responded. "They did everything to keep me. We wanted the release, not them. They promised me I'd get the fights I wanted and I'd get a title shot, but they wanted to push other guys, not me. So I decided to look for a new promoter."

As of press time, Byrd, 26-0 (14), hadn't yet nailed down a new promotional contract, but he said he'd been having no trouble finding interested parties. And once the Flint, Michigan, southpaw has secured a promoter and returns to the ring, he promises a more exciting style, combined with his long-running willingness to fight anyone and everyone.

"I'm packing on more muscle because I want to be more explosive," Byrd said. "It's time to change; I'm going to take more chances. I'm still not going to get hit, but I'm going to be a more exciting fighter. I'll fight any of the young guns. Let's all match up. We gotta lose sometime, so why not fight each other to find out who's the best.

"I just love to box and I want to get back in the ring. If my promoter lets me, I'll fight 12 times in '99, once every month."

FUTURE FIGHTS

By Art Manteris

VP/Director of Race and Sports Operations Las Vegas Hilton SuperBook

Las Vegas Hilton

Favorite	Underdog	Odds	The Skinny
Naseem Hamed	Marco Antonio Barrera	3-1	Barrera may be disciplined enough to win
Roy Jones	Bernard Hopkins	10-1	Hopkins just too small, Jones too focused
Shannon Briggs	Lou Savarese	7-5	Competitive matchup
Oba Carr	Frankie Randall	7-5	Frankie's best days behind him

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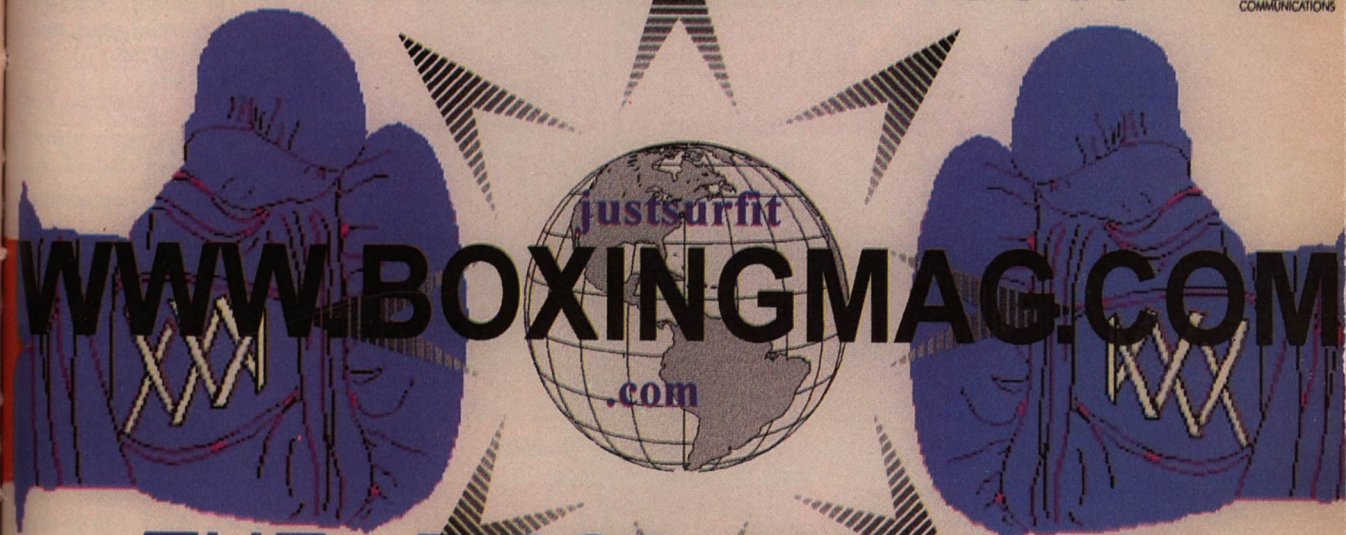

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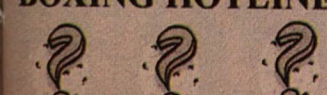

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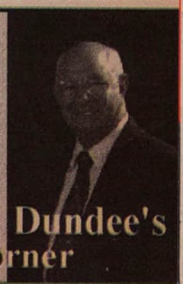

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